



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

## Quarterly Revenue Expenditure Outturn for Local Authorities in England: April - June 2014-15

- Total net current expenditure for quarter 1 of the financial year 2014-15 is estimated to be £27.63bn and the forecast for the whole year is £113.94bn
- Forecast net current expenditure is 0.7 per cent lower than the equivalent budget figure (£114.71bn) reported by local authorities prior to the beginning of the financial year.
- The quarter 1 net current expenditure is 24.1 per cent of the initial reported budget figure for 2014-15 of £114.71bn.

Local Government Finance  
*Statistical Release*

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Introduction	2
Quarterly revenue outturn by service	3
In-year forecasts	5
Quarterly revenue outturn by class of authority	6
Accompanying table	7
Technical notes	8
Strengths and limitations of the data	9
Data quality	10
Enquiries	12

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# Introduction

This statistical release provides quarterly revenue expenditure outturn data for local authorities in England, for quarter 1 of the financial year 2014-15 (April to June 2014), and compares it to revenue account data for the same financial year. The data are drawn from Quarterly Revenue Outturn (QRO) forms and Revenue Account (RA) forms requested from all of the 444 authorities in England. To conform to National Accounts principles, these figures are provided on a non International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS19) and a PFI “off balance sheet” basis, unless otherwise stated.

The release has been compiled by the Local Government Finance: Data Collection, Analysis and Accountancy Division of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

- Authorities in England submit budget data to the Department before the start of each financial year on the Revenue Account (RA) form, and Revenue Outturn (RO) data after the end of the year.
- The Quarterly Revenue Outturn (QRO) data, which are collected following quarters 1, 2 and 3 of the financial year, provide an early indication of local authority revenue expenditure outturn. Historically, outturn on revenue spending has differed from initial (RA) budget.
- The QRO figures in this release are based on valid returns from 440 authorities. Authorities whose data are missing or invalid are listed in the strengths and limitations of the data section on page 9. Where authority information is missing or invalid, figures have been imputed for the purpose of calculating aggregate figures, as described in the methodology section of this release.
- This release provides the first estimate of financial quarter 1 revenue expenditure outturn data. Authorities will have the opportunity to revise their quarter 1 data following quarter 2, and an update of these figures will then be published.
- Throughout this release, comparisons are made between the budget (RA) figures submitted by authorities and their QRO outturn figures. It is important to note that the RA figures are a snapshot produced by authorities at a single point prior to the financial year. The purpose of the comparison is to update the expected expenditure data with actual expenditure data and give a clearer picture of what authorities are spending over the year. A difference between the budget figure and the outturn figure does not necessarily represent an over- or under-spend.

# 1. Quarterly revenue outturn by service

Table 1 shows the estimated quarterly revenue outturn data for the quarter 1 of the financial year 2014-15 at a national level compared to the RA figure.

- Nationally, net current expenditure for the quarter is estimated at £27.63bn which is 24.1 per cent and therefore less than a quarter, of the comparable budgeted (RA) figure.

<b>Table 1: Estimated Quarterly Revenue Outturn data for England Q1 2014-15</b>				
<b>Expenditure (£m)</b>		<b>Q1</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>Q1 as</b>
		<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>% of</b>
			<b>(RA) fig- ure</b>	<b>Budget</b>
QRO line				
1, 2	<b>General Public Services</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>2,364</b>	27.9
3	<b>Defence</b>	11	44	24.0
4,5	<b>Public order and Safety</b>	<b>3,265</b>	<b>13,644</b>	23.9
6, 7, 8	<b>Economic Affairs</b>	<b>1,176</b>	<b>5,106</b>	23.0
9	<b>Environmental Protection</b>	1,018	4,519	22.5
10, 11, 12	<b>Housing and Community Amenities</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>1,706</b>	20.8
13, 14	<b>Health</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>2,849</b>	21.5
15	<b>Recreation, Culture and Religion</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>2,491</b>	24.4
16	<b>Education</b>	<b>6,639</b>	<b>27,123</b>	24.5
Imputed	Non-pay element of schools expenditure	2,096	...	...
17, 18	<b>Social Protection</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>23,709</b>	23.7
19	<b>Non-distributed costs: retirement benefits</b>	181	772	23.5
20	<b>Non-distributed costs: Costs of unused shares of IT facilities and other assets</b>	4	16	23.6
21	<b>Non-distributed costs: Revenue expenditure on surplus assets</b>	3	11	29.5
22	<b>Other Services (exclude Public health)</b>	126	470	26.7
23	<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE (TOTAL OF LINES 1 TO 22)<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>22,361</b>	<b>93,534</b>	23.9
24	<b>Housing benefits: rent allowances - mandatory payments</b>	3,957	16,069	24.6
25	<b>Housing benefits: non-HRA rent rebates - mandatory payments</b>	143	531	26.9
26	<b>Housing benefits: rent rebates to HRA tenants - mandatory payments</b>	1,074	4,401	24.4
27	<b>Housing benefits: subsidy limitation transfers from HRA</b>	0	0	-29.2
28	<b>Contribution to the HRA re items shared by the whole community</b>	3	11	22.8
29	Parish precepts	129	389	33.2

30	Integrated Transport Authority levy <sup>(b)</sup>	-9	n/a	n/a
31	Waste Disposal Authority levy <sup>(b)</sup>	-8	n/a	n/a
32	London Pensions Fund Authority levy	6	26	24.1
33	Other levies	11	30	36.9
34	<b>External Trading Accounts net surplus(-)/ deficit(+)</b>	<b>-83</b>	n/a	n/a
39	<i>Capital charges included in External Trading Accounts (Line 34)</i>	10	n/a	n/a
35	<b>Internal Trading Accounts net surplus(-)/ deficit(+)</b>	<b>43</b>	n/a	n/a
40	<i>Capital charges included in Internal Trading Accounts (Line 35)</i>	-8	n/a	n/a
36	Adjustments to net current expenditure	-1	92	-0.9
37	Appropriations to(+) / from(-) Accumulated Absences Account	1	-4	-21.2
38	<b>NET CURRENT EXPENDITURE (TOTAL OF LINES 23 TO 37)<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>27,627</b>	<b>114,711</b>	<b>24.1</b>
41	Interest payable and similar charges	623	2,857	21.8
42	Interest receivable <sup>(c)</sup>	-166	-744	22.3
(a)	Includes non-pay element of schools expenditure imputed from RA returns.			
(b)	This levy should net out to zero across the year. The fact that it does not do so for the outturn figure(s) is likely to be due to timing differences and estimation on the part of authorities.			
(c)	The negative figure denotes income.			

## 2. In-year forecasts

In-year forecasts (predicted outturn for the whole year) are provided for a number of lines on the QRO form. Table 2 shows these figures at a national level for total service expenditure and net current expenditure and compares them to the budget (RA) figures provided before the start of the financial year.

Forecast expenditure for 2014-15 is 0.1 per cent less than the budgeted figure reported in the RA forms at the start of the year. Annual expenditure forecasts submitted via the quarter 1 QRO return often differ slightly from the budget figures; in 2012-13 the annual forecasts were slightly higher than budget and in 2013-14 they were lower.

- The in-year forecast for total service expenditure is nearly 100 per cent of the RA figure for the year.
- The in-year forecast for net current expenditure is 99.3 per cent of the RA figure.

<b>Expenditure (£m)</b>	<b>2014-15 Forecast Outturn (QRO)<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>2014-15 Budgeted (RA) figure</b>	<b>Percentage change from RA</b>
23 <b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>93,618</b>	<b>93,534</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
38 <b>NET CURRENT EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>113,944</b>	<b>114,711</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>
41 Interest payable and similar charges	2,579	2,857	-9.7%
42 Interest receivable <sup>(b)</sup>	-706	-744	-5.1%

(a) Forecast includes non-pay element of schools expenditure imputed from RA returns.  
(b) The negative figures denote income.

### 3. Quarterly revenue outturn by class of authority

Table 3 shows total net current expenditure (including the imputed non-pay element of schools expenditure) for quarter 1, the in-year forecast, and the comparable RA figure, by class of authority.

- For non-levying authorities the in-year forecast outturn ranges from 103.3 per cent of the RA figure for the London Boroughs to 74.4 per cent for Other Authorities.
- For non-levying authorities, quarter one outturn ranges from 24.9 per cent of the in-year forecast for Metropolitan and Shire Districts to 21.6 per cent for greater London Authority. This does not include Other Authorities..

<b>Table 3: Quarter 3 net current expenditure by class of authority</b>					
<b>Total net current expenditure (£m)</b>	<b>Quarter 1 outturn</b>	<b>2014-15 Forecast Outturn (QRO)</b>	<b>2014-15 Budgeted (RA) figure</b>	<b>Q1 outturn as percentage of in-year forecast</b>	<b>Percentage change of forecast to RA</b>
ENGLAND	27,627	113,944	114,711	24.2	99.3
<u>Class of authority</u>					
London Boroughs	5,045	21,132	20,452	23.9	103.3
Greater London Authority	1,080	5,007	4,961	21.6	100.9
Metropolitan Districts	5,675	22,792	23,499	24.9	97.0
Unitary Authorities	5,267	21,821	21,989	24.1	99.2
Shire Counties	6,101	25,031	25,244	24.4	99.2
Shire Districts	2,150	8,629	8,815	24.9	97.9
Police Authorities	1,986	8,041	8,235	24.7	97.6
Fire Authorities	337	1,416	1,416	23.8	100.0
Other Authorities <sup>(a)</sup>	-15	75	101	-20.4	74.4

(a) Other authorities include park, passenger and waste authorities. These authorities levy and so expenditure will be offset by levy income within the financial year. Greater Manchester waste authority had a large under-spend because of pre commissioning deductions being applied for facilities that should have been operational now but are now expected to be operational next financial year. This is the main reason for the low quarterly and forecast figures for Other Authorities.

# Accompanying table

An additional table has been produced at local authority level for authorities who submitted valid data. This is not included in the printed version of this release. It is available on the Department's website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/revenueexpenditure/revenue201314/>).

and shows quarter 1 outturn data and in-year forecast data at local authority and class of authority level.

## Terminology used in this release

A list of terms relating to local government finance is given in the glossary at Annex G of *Local Government Finance Statistics England* No. 24 2014. This is accessible at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-financial-statistics-england-2014> The most relevant terms for this release are explained below.

**Aggregate External Finance** is the total amount of grant provided to finance all local government expenditure, excluding that subject to separate arrangements under statutory schemes, rent allowances and rebates and council tax benefit, which are funded by specific grants outside Aggregate External Finance.

**Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) codes** provide a standard means of referring to services provided by government. Further detail on what is covered by each COFOG code is available from the UN Statistics Division (link below). COFOG-1 codes (the highest level of the hierarchy) are used on the QRO form. (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=4>).

**Current expenditure** is the cost of running local authority services within the financial year. This includes the costs of staffing, heating, lighting and cleaning, together with expenditure on goods and services consumed within the year. This expenditure is offset by income from sales, fees and charges and other (non-grant) income, which gives **total net current expenditure**. Total net current expenditure also includes payments made by local authorities on behalf of central government, under statutory schemes and the payment of rent allowances and rebates. Such payments are fully funded by central government through specific grants outside **Aggregate External Finance**.

**International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS 19)**. Local authorities' final accounts are required to comply in full with International Accounting Standard 19 on employment benefits. This requires future liabilities for retirement benefits to be recognised in the accounts for all the main categories of local government employees, with the exception of teachers. However, for National Accounts purposes, the cost of retirements is taken to be the benefits and contributions actually payable in the year.

**PFI schemes in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)**. Under the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), assets provided under PFI schemes are normally shown on the authority's balance sheet. Local authorities are required to account for their PFI schemes on the IFRS basis. For National Accounts purposes, however, PFI

schemes are accounted for on an “on balance sheet” basis only where economic ownership of the asset rests with the authority. **Economic ownership** for national accounts purposes is determined by whether the local authority or the contractor has an asset of the property used to provide the contracted services. A party has an asset of the property where that party has access to the benefits of the property and exposure to the risks inherent in those benefits.

**Total service expenditure** is added to figures for housing benefits, parish precepts, levies, trading accounts and adjustments to expenditure to reach the net current expenditure figure. The majority of the difference between total service expenditure and net current expenditure is made up of housing benefits.

## Technical notes

### Methodology

This release compares QRO data with RA data. The forms are not directly comparable and so, in order to make the comparison, relevant RA lines have had to be aggregated to provide a comparison to each QRO line. A mapping document which shows the relationship between lines on the RA, RO and QRO forms is available online at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/revenueexpenditure/revenue201314/>.

The non-pay element of schools expenditure is not a mandatory part of the QRO collection. Where an education authority does not provide this figure, it is imputed from the 2014-15 RA figure and the 2012-13 RO figure. This non-pay element is taken to be the proportion of RA line 190 (total schools expenditure) for each authority which is deemed likely to apply to schools’ non-pay (see section on non-pay below), multiplied by the percentage determined below which converts it to a quarterly figure.

Aggregate national and class of authority figures are produced by using imputed figures for any authority which failed to submit its form by the deadline for inclusion in this release, or for which the form was received but contained significant data quality issues which could not be resolved with the authority in time for publication.

The imputed figures for such authorities are taken to be a percentage of the comparable Revenue Account (RA) figures submitted for the financial year. This is the Q1 outturn figure as a percentage of the comparable RA figure for valid authorities. For this release, this percentage was calculated to be 24.1 per cent. This methodology assumes that the missing authority’s outturn is in keeping with its budgeted expenditure and that its expenditure in the current quarter, as a percentage of its budgeted expenditure for the year, is the same as that for authorities for which validated QRO data are available.

In order to estimate the education line (line 16) for authorities with missing or invalid data, both RA and RO (Revenue Outturn) figures are used. The 2012-13 RO for each authority is used to determine the percentage of its total net current expenditure on schools which is made up of employee costs. This percentage is applied to the RA figure for total net current expenditure on schools to estimate the employee element of this expenditure, and is added to RA lines 145 and



165 (services to young people and other community learners, and other strategic functions) to produce an estimate of the annual QRO education figure for the authority. The quarterly figure is then estimated by applying to this annual figure the percentage described above.

Similarly, the non-pay element of schools' expenditure is calculated by taking the remaining portion of the RA figure and estimating the quarterly figure for education as described in the paragraph above. This calculation is carried out for all education authorities who did not explicitly supply a non-pay figure on the Q1 return, and the figures are reported separately in Table 1.

Where imputation methodology has been applied to an authority for the purpose of producing aggregate figures, no data are published for that authority in the online LA-level table (available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/revenueexpenditure/revenue201415/>).

## Strengths and limitations of the data

The QRO data provide a timely indication of revenue expenditure at local authority level, giving an earlier indication than was previously possible using only the RO data collected after year-end.

The data are limited by certain factors, as outlined below.

- a. Local authorities are asked to work to a level of materiality of £1m for all lines except 34, 35, 39 and 40 (trading account lines), for which the materiality level is £5m.
- b. For the purposes of the QRO return, authorities are asked to estimate the apportionment of central service charges to the appropriate service lines on an accrued basis. However, the majority of authorities do not undertake this apportionment formally until year end. There is a large difference, therefore, between the RA and QRO for line 2 within General Public Services, as authorities have either had to estimate the apportionment or have not undertaken any apportionment of recharges in their return (instead including all costs in line 2 of the return).
- c. The non-pay element of schools expenditure is not a mandatory element of the QRO collection, and is imputed from the RA form as outlined in the methodology section of this release where not provided by the authority. This methodology assumes that the spending pattern for this type of expenditure is the same as the average spending pattern of valid authorities across all lines on the form.
- d. Where authorities fail to submit a return, or where, at the point of publication, significant data quality issues remain, figures for the authority are imputed for the purpose of calculating aggregate figures. This imputation relies on a number of assumptions, including that the authority's expenditure remains in line with its budget and that the proportion of its expenditure occurring in the current quarter is equal to the same proportion for validated authorities. **1.12 per cent of the quarter 1 2014-15 net current expenditure estimate for England is comprised of imputed values.**
- e. Authorities for whom data were not received at the point at which this release was finalised were: Bristol, Mole Valley, Southwark, and Thurrock.

## Data quality

The information in this Statistical Release is derived from Department for Communities and Local Government Quarterly Revenue Outturn (QRO) returns submitted by local authorities in England. All local authorities are required to complete all relevant parts of the QRO return.

Figures are subjected to rigorous pre-defined validation tests as the data are received and stored, and queries are followed up with authorities prior to publication.

The release document, once prepared, is also subject to intensive peer review before being cleared as fit for the purposes of publication.

## Uses made of the data

The purpose of the QRO collection is to improve the economic data used for fiscal monitoring by HM Treasury and the data used to monitor changes in the wider economy which are maintained by the Office for National Statistics. This in turn supports the Government's aims of maintaining sound public finances and macroeconomic stability. Improving the local authority data provided to central government is a key part of this.

Comments and feedback from the end user for further improvement or about your experiences with this product will be welcomed. Please send all views to [qro@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:qro@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

## Notes

This Statistical Release can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/revenueexpenditure/revenue201415/>).

Timings of future releases are regularly placed on the Department's website, <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics#forthcoming-publications> and on the National Statistics website, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/release-calendar/index.html>

Guidance notes, which accompany each form sent to local authorities, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-local-councils-more-transparent-and-accountable-to-local-people/supporting-pages/quarterly-revenue-outturn>

For a fuller picture of recent trends in local government finance, readers are directed to Local Government Finance Statistics England No. 24 2014, which is available electronically from the Department for Communities and Local Government website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-financial-statistics-england-2014>

Quarterly capital statistics are published for England and are available at the following web link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-local-government-finance>

Revenue Account (RA) and Revenue Outturn (RO) data for England are available at the following web link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/revenueexpenditure/>

## User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the "Public enquiries" contact given in the "Enquiries" section below.

The Department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

## Symbols and conventions

### Symbols

... Not available

0 Zero or negligible

n/a Not applicable

|| Discontinuity

(P) Provisional

(R) Revised since the last statistical release

### Rounding

Where figures have been rounded there may be a discrepancy between the published total and the sum of the constituent items.

## Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official statistics and the Department for Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>). There are two types of revisions that the policy covers:

### Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

### Scheduled Revisions

Authorities will have the opportunity to revise their quarter 1 data following quarter 2, and an update of these figures will then be published.

# Devolved administration statistics

The Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Government collect annual revenue outturn data. Their information can be found at the following websites:

Scotland:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Local-Government-Finance>

Wales:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/localgov2010/100623/?lang=en>

Northern Ireland:

[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/local\\_government/local\\_government\\_funding.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/local_government/local_government_funding.htm)

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Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/browse-by-theme/index.html>

Information about statistics at DCLG is available via the Department's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>

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