

First Release

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Theme: People and Places

Housing Benefit Speed of Processing: January 2014 to March 2014

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

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

These statistics were released on 23 July 2014 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority and contain new statistics relating to quarter 4 of 2013/14 (*January 2014 to March 2014*).

These statistics are Official Statistics. See:

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

There are no longer any Council Tax Benefit statistics to produce alongside those for Housing Benefit, as Council Tax Benefit was abolished in April 2013 and replaced by a system of localised support.

Key Findings

- The average time taken to process new HB claims for quarter 4 of 2013/14 is 23 calendar days which is the same processing time as quarter 4 of 2012/13.
- The average time taken to process change of circumstances to HB claims for quarter 4 of 2013/14 is 5 calendar days compared with 7 calendar days in quarter 4 of 2012/13.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing--2>

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:
22nd October 2014
(See Notes section)

HB Speed of Processing

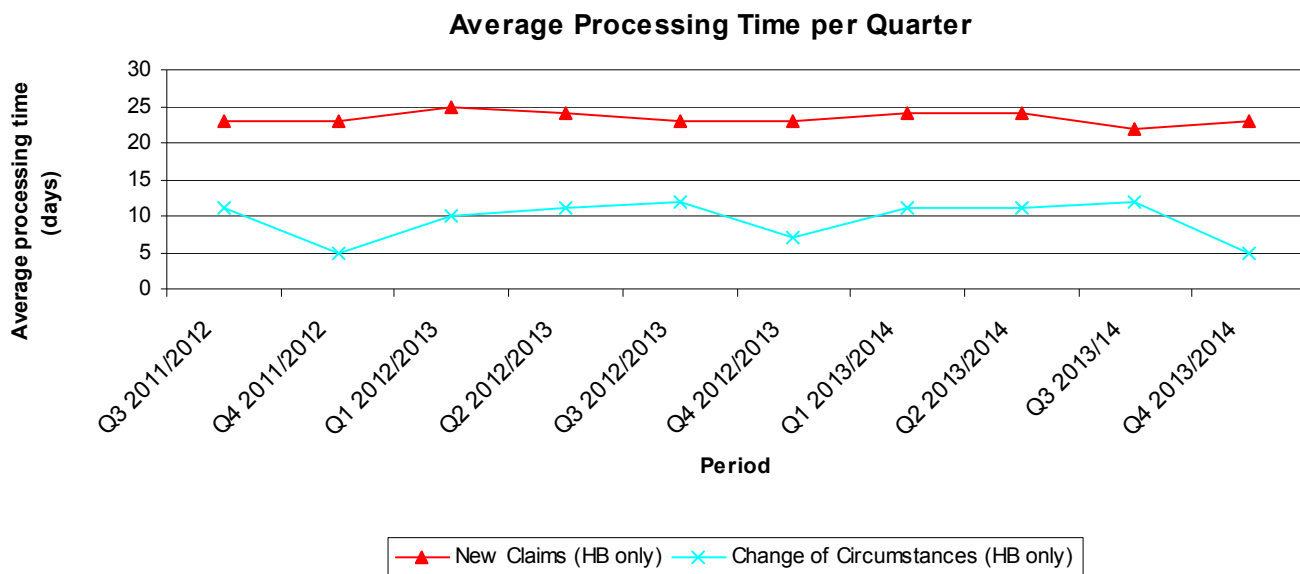
HB is an income related benefit. Speed of processing relates to the average time taken to process new claims and changes of circumstances for this benefit. The average time is measured in calendar days, rounded to the nearest day.

Table 1 Average HB Speed of Processing for quarter 4, 2013/14:

Average number of days to process (Great Britain)

	New Claims	Change of Circumstances
Quarter 4		
January	24	11
February	21	5
March	23	3

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

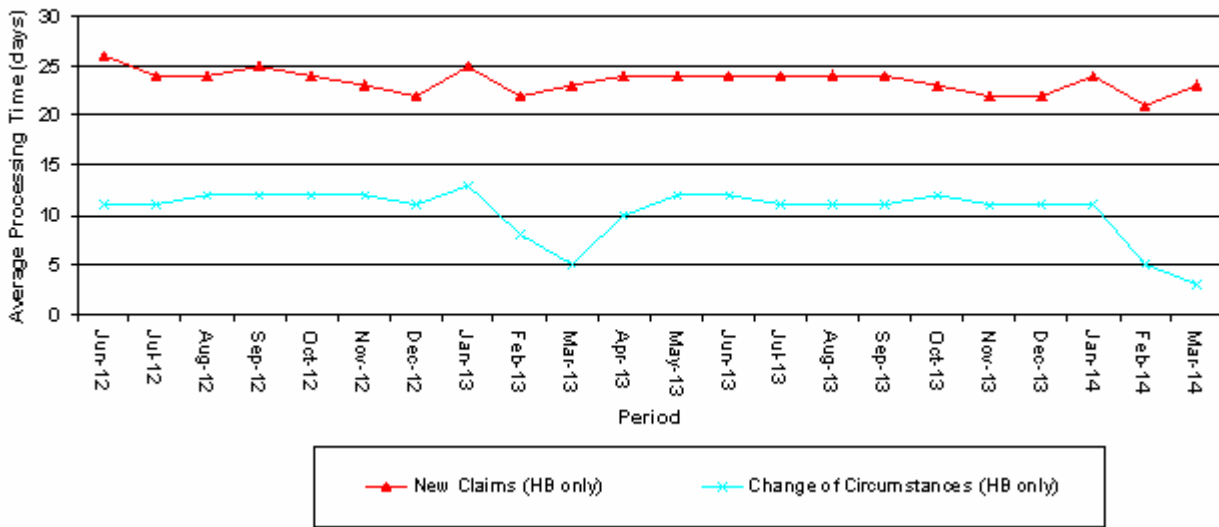


In February and March of each year, most local authorities perform change of circumstance processing to account for increasing rents in the social sector. As these changes are relatively straightforward and can sometimes be performed automatically, the average “change of circumstance” processing time for February and March is considerably lower than January (and the rest of 2013/14).

Notes:

Further information on Speed of Processing data sources and methodology is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209959/sop_rti_overview.pdf

Average Processing Time per Month



Latest statistical breakdowns are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing-2>

NOTES

1. Related Housing Benefit statistics

a) The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also publish Housing Benefit monthly caseload National Statistics via [Stat-Xplore](#) – Stat-Xplore enables users to create customised tabulations and view results in interactive charts and maps:

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-caseload-statistics--2>

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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing-2012-13>

c) In addition, users can find links to DWP additional statistical analyses that have not been included in our standard publications at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/ad-hoc-statistical-publications-list>

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@dpw.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, join the “Welfare and Benefits” community at www.statsusernet.org.uk.

3. Known Issues, Changes and Revisions to SoP statistics

There are no longer any Council Tax Benefit statistics to produce alongside those for Housing Benefit, as Council Tax Benefit was abolished in April 2013 and replaced by a system of localised support.

This is the fourth release of these statistics since the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in April 2013.

Quality assurance processes identified problems with quarter 4 data for 1 local authority in relation to these statistics. In keeping with UKSA protocols we did not publish data for this local authority for quarter 4 2013/14. 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

We plan to improve the presentation and content of this statistical summary in future publications. Users are invited to send any related comments or requests via stats-consultation@dpw.gsi.gov.uk or by completing and returning the questionnaire here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing-questionnaire>