



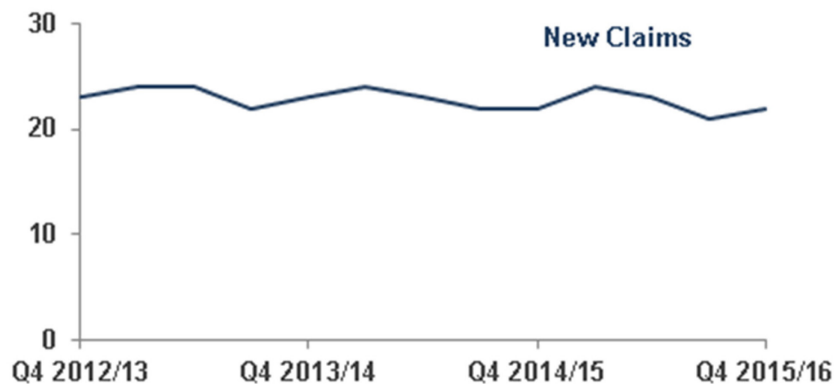
Housing Benefit is an income related benefit that is intended to help meet housing costs for rented accommodation. Speed of processing relates to the average time taken to process new claims and change of circumstances for this benefit. The average time is measured in calendar days, rounded to the nearest day. Statistics covering all four quarters of 2015/16 are published as part of this release.

Main stories

22 days to process new Housing Benefit claims in the fourth quarter of 2015/16.

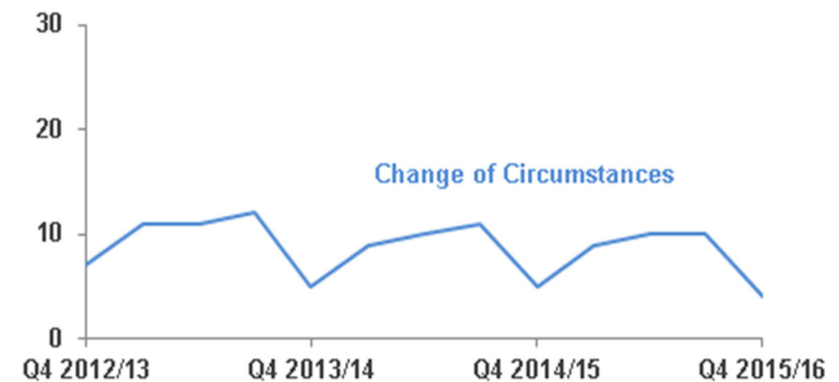
4 days to process Change of Circumstance on existing Housing Benefit claims in the fourth quarter of 2015/16.

Average Processing Time per Quarter



The average time taken to process new claims is fairly consistent over time. Processing time in the fourth quarter of 2015/16 is the same as the fourth quarter of 2014/15.

Average Processing Time per Quarter



The average speed of processing varies throughout the year, but is fairly consistent over time. Processing time in the fourth quarter of 2015/16 is on average 1 day lower than in the same quarter of 2014/15.

At a glance

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DWP Press Office: 0203 267 5129

Published 27 July 2016

ISBN: **978-1-78425-797-2**

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What you need to know

These statistics were released on 27 July 2016 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority.

This means that the [Official Statistics](#).

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

This release contains Official Statistics on Speed of Processing of Housing Benefit claims for quarter 4 of 2015/16.

Statistics covering all four quarters of 2015/16 are also published as part of this release.

The statistics show speed of processing of new claims and changes of circumstances. Volumes of claims, changes and the total days to process are included in supporting detailed tables.

Further information and detailed tables, including a breakdown by local authority, can be viewed at the [Housing Benefit Speed of Processing Collection Page](#).

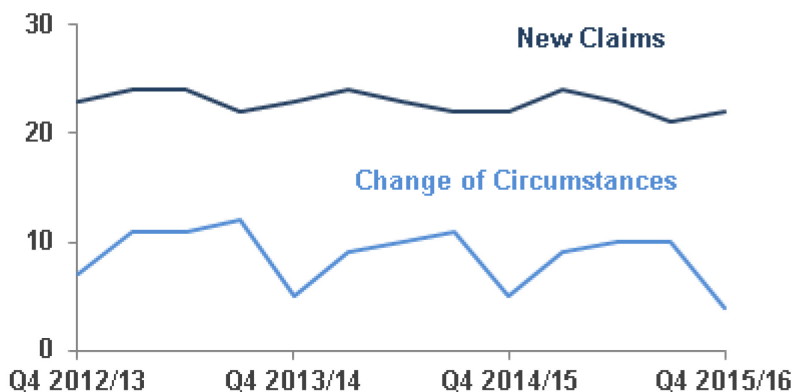
The statistics are released quarterly in April, July, October and January and are sourced from data originally collected via administrative systems (Single Housing Benefit Extract).

Genuine variations between months can occur at a Local Authority level. For example, 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.

The next release is planned to be in October 2016. This will contain data for quarter 1 of the 2016/17 financial year (April 2016 to June 2016).

Average Housing Benefit Speed of Processing

Average Processing Time per Quarter



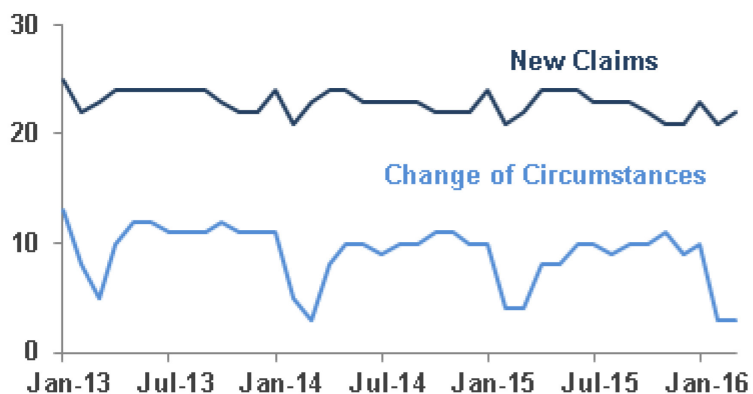
The average time taken to process new HB claims in quarter 4 of 2015/16 is 22 calendar days. This is the same as quarter 4 of 2014/15.

In quarter 4 there were 314 thousand new HB claims. This represents a decrease of 2 thousand (0.8%) since last quarter and a decrease of 36 thousand (10.4%) since quarter 4 of 2014/15.

The average time taken to process change of circumstances to HB claims for quarter 4 of 2015/16 is 4 calendar days. This is 1 day lower than what it was in quarter 4 of 2014/15.

For quarter 4 there were 6.45 million changes of circumstances to HB claims. This is a decrease of 423 thousand (6.2%) cases from quarter 4 of 2014/15.

Average Processing Time per Month



The average time taken to process new HB claims is: 23 calendar days for January; 21 calendar days for February and 22 calendar days for March.

At quarter 4 there were 314 thousand new HB claims:

- 106 thousand in January
- 104 thousand in February
- 105 thousand in March

The average time taken to process change of circumstances to HB claims is: 10 calendar days for January; 3 calendar days for February and 3 calendar days for March.

At quarter 4 there were 6.4 million changes of circumstances to HB claims:

- 0.94 million in January
- 2.75 million in February
- 2.82 million in March

The average time taken to process change of circumstances tends to decrease in February and/or March. This may be due to the increase of resources to deal with bulk change of circumstances, and often uprating activity, at the end of the financial year.

Please note: The monthly figures may not sum to the quarterly ones. Local authorities with one or more months of missing data are excluded from the quarterly total.

Where to find out more

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 in processing times are available historically, and the new claims processing times are broadly comparable over time. However, a change in definition for change of circumstances between 2007/08 and 2009/10 means that direct comparison of this element with Speed of Processing statistics is not meaningful. See [Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit: statistics on speed of processing 2012-13](#).

[Background information](#) and [frequently asked questions](#) on statistics for the average time taken to process Housing Benefit (previously right time indicator statistics).

Policies and procedures on DWP National and Official Statistics, including a Quality Guideline, Confidentiality and Access Policy Statement, Pre-release Access arrangements and Statement of Administrative Sources: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-statistical-summary-policies-and-statements>

Other National and Official Statistics

Details of other National and Official Statistics produced by the Department for Work and Pensions can be found on the Gov.uk website via the following link:

- A schedule of statistical releases and a list of the most recent releases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/about/statistics>

The Department for Work and Pensions also publish Housing Benefit caseload National Statistics. The statistics are published quarterly showing monthly figures. Since August 2013, Housing Benefit statistics have been released via [Stat-Xplore](#) alongside a set of summary [Excel tables](#).

Feedback

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

An on-going questionnaire, enabling DWP to target future consultations at interested users; shaping the future direction of statistics development to address user needs; and helping ensure value for money, whilst giving users a structured way of expressing their views is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/housing-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing-questionnaire>

Completed questionnaires can be returned by e-mail to stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by post to the following address:

Dissemination Team, Data and Analytics, Department for Work and Pensions, Room BP5201, Benton Park Road, Longbenton, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE98 1YX
Users can also join the “Welfare and Benefit Statistics” community at: <http://www.statsusernet.org.uk> DWP announces items of interest to users via this forum, as well as replying to users’ questions.