



# The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

## Official Statistics 20 May 2021

### Introduction

This statistical release provides summary information on appeals, which represent the highest volume (in terms of number of cases) of the work of the Planning Inspectorate.

These statistics are produced each month and the focus is on timeliness, as that is an area in which stakeholders have an interest. Information on the decisions that we have made is also included; and on the number of Inspectors available to make those decisions.

For this release additional statistics on workload volumes have been provided that are published on a quarterly and annual basis.

We are seeking feedback! If you have any thoughts on how we can develop these statistics – including on the additional quarterly and annual figures - please let us know at [statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

These statistics have been published to ensure everyone has equal access to the information and to support the Planning Inspectorate's commitment to release information where possible.

This statistical bulletin provides<sup>1</sup>:

- Appeals decisions and events held from May 2020 to April 2021
- The time taken to reach those decisions
- Number of open cases
- Number of Inspectors
- Number of virtual events
- Quarterly and annual statistics on volumes of cases received, decided and allowed

The data in this release is only applicable to England.

### The Planning Inspectorate

The Planning Inspectorate makes decision and provides recommendations and advice on a range of land use planning-related issues across England and Wales. We do this in a fair, open and timely way.

The Planning Inspectorate deals with planning appeals, national infrastructure planning applications, examinations of local plans and other planning-related and specialist casework

<sup>1</sup> See Annex A for breakdown of what has been included in recent releases.

in England and Wales. The Planning Inspectorate is an executive agency, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and the Welsh Government.

## Summary

This release has been slightly restructured to reflect that, as with everyone else, the Inspectorate has now been operating for over 12 months with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>2</sup>.

### Performance

The mean average time to make a decision, across all cases in the last 12 months (May 20 to Apr 21), was 27 weeks. The median time is 23 weeks.

The median timeliness for April 21 was 21.9 weeks – this was an increase of 2 weeks from March 21.

Median timeliness by procedure type is shown in the summary table below.

Procedure type	Last 12 months	April 21
Written Representations	23 weeks	21 weeks
Hearings	47 weeks	61 weeks
Inquiries	56 weeks	62 weeks

The median time to decision for planning cases (there are many more of these decisions than in the other categories) is lower than for other casework categories, apart from in May 20. Across the whole year, the median time to decision for planning cases is 22 weeks. Enforcement decisions made in the last 12 months had a median decision time of 34 weeks. The median time to decision for specialist decisions is broadly the same as for enforcement decisions, and longer than the median for planning decisions.

The median time for inquiries under the Rosewell Process over the 12 months to April 21 is 40 weeks.

### Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate has made 16,980 appeal decisions<sup>3</sup> in the last 12 months, an average of just over 1,400 per month. The monthly breakdown shows fewer decisions from May to August 20, and for the months of January and March 21, than would have been expected, due to the impact of the national lockdowns.

The number of decisions each month showed an upward trend to October 20 (with a slight dip in August linked to leave for decision makers). However, since October decisions decreased. The 1,083 decisions for April 21 was almost 33% lower than March 21.

Written representations decisions had recovered to pre-pandemic levels between September and December 20 (pre-pandemic being between approximately 1,600 and 2,000 decisions per month). January and March 21 were lower. And April 21 was considerably lower at just under 1,000.

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<sup>2</sup> Previous statistical releases have outlined the impact of the pandemic on the Inspectorate in three ways; events were suspended during the first lockdown in Spring 2020, timeliness measures increased, and the number of open cases also increased.

<sup>3</sup> The appeal types include planning & related appeals, Enforcement and Specialist casework (covering a range of casework types). Please note that some previous releases covered only Rights of Way orders within Specialist casework. Annex A details the scope of previous releases, Annex D the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

Decisions for hearings for the last six months have ranged between approximately 40 and 60 per month. The 37 inquiry decisions made in April 21 were the most in any of the last 12 months.

### **Open Cases**

At the end of April 21, the Planning Inspectorate had over eleven thousand one hundred cases open<sup>4</sup> (11,184). This is an increase of 470 (4%), from the previous month, and the highest number of open cases in the last 12 months.

### **Planning Inspectors**

There were 355 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in April 21 – with a full-time equivalent of 317. A small number (six) of recently recruited Inspectors, as part of planned recruitment, started in April 21.

### **Virtual Events**

The Inspectorate are continuing to carry out events 'virtually'. There were 82 cases involving Virtual Events during April 2021.

### **Quarterly & annual volume statistics**

#### *Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)*

- Nine applications were submitted in 2020/21, compared to 14 in 2019/20
- Ten reports were issued to the relevant Secretary of State in 2020/21, compared to 20 in 2019/20

#### Local Plans

- In 2020/21, 32 plans were submitted for examination, compared to 59 in 2019/20

#### Section 78 Planning Appeals<sup>5</sup>

- The number of appeals received dropped by 7% in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20
- The number of decisions was 32% lower in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20. The number of decisions in 2019/20 was the highest in the past eleven years, and 2020/21 decisions were heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- One in four appeals decided (25%) were allowed in 2020/21, the same proportion as in 2019/20
- The percentage of dwellings allowed, for major dwellings appeals (those with proposals of 10 or more dwellings) was 58% in 2020/21, compared to 45% in 2019/20.

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<sup>4</sup> Open cases are any that have been received but on which a decision has not yet been made/ issued. Cases included comprise Planning, Enforcement, and the following Specialist cases: Common Land, Environment, Purchase Notice and Rights of Way. Tree Preservation Orders, Hedgerows and High Hedges cases are excluded.

<sup>5</sup> s78 planning appeals are the highest volume of appeals the Inspectorate receives. These are appeals against refusal of planning application, conditions attached to a planning application approval on non-decision within the specified time period of a planning application by a local planning authority



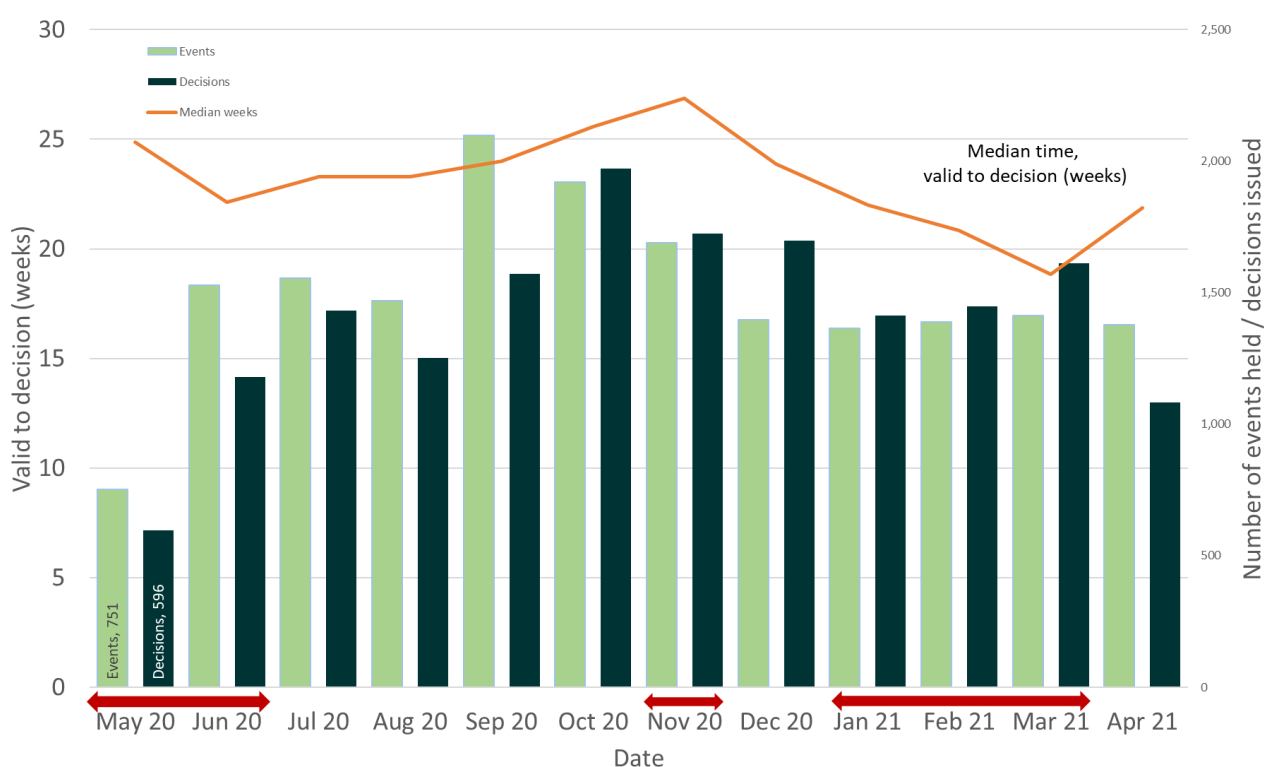
## Decisions, Events & Open Cases

The number of decisions issued in April 21 was significantly lower than the previous month, with only May and June 20 being lower, with the impact of the first Covid lockdown. The number of decisions issued in April 21 has been partly influenced by decision makers taking leave over the Easter holiday period.

The number of events between December 20 and Apr 21 have been around 1,400 per month. In the last 12 months the highest number of events held was September 20, when almost 2,100 events were held.

The median<sup>6</sup> time to decide a case increased by two weeks between March and April 21, with the median in April 21 being just under 22 weeks. Performance had been improving from November 20 to March 21.

Figure 1: Number of events held, decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; May 20 to Apr 21



Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System

Note – Red arrows indicate periods when national lockdowns were in effect

Table 1: Number of events held, decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; May 20 to Mar 21

Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Events Held	751	1,528	1,555	1,470	2,097r	1,921r	1,691r	1,398r	1,366r	1,390r	1,414r	1,377	17,958
Decisions	596	1,180	1,432	1,253	1,571	1,971	1,725	1,699	1,412	1,447	1,611	1,083	16,980
Median	24.9	22.1	23.3	23.3	24.0	25.6	26.9	23.9	22.0	20.9	18.9	21.9	23.0

Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System. r denotes revision – a change of more than 5 cases since last month (see Background Quality Report for more information)

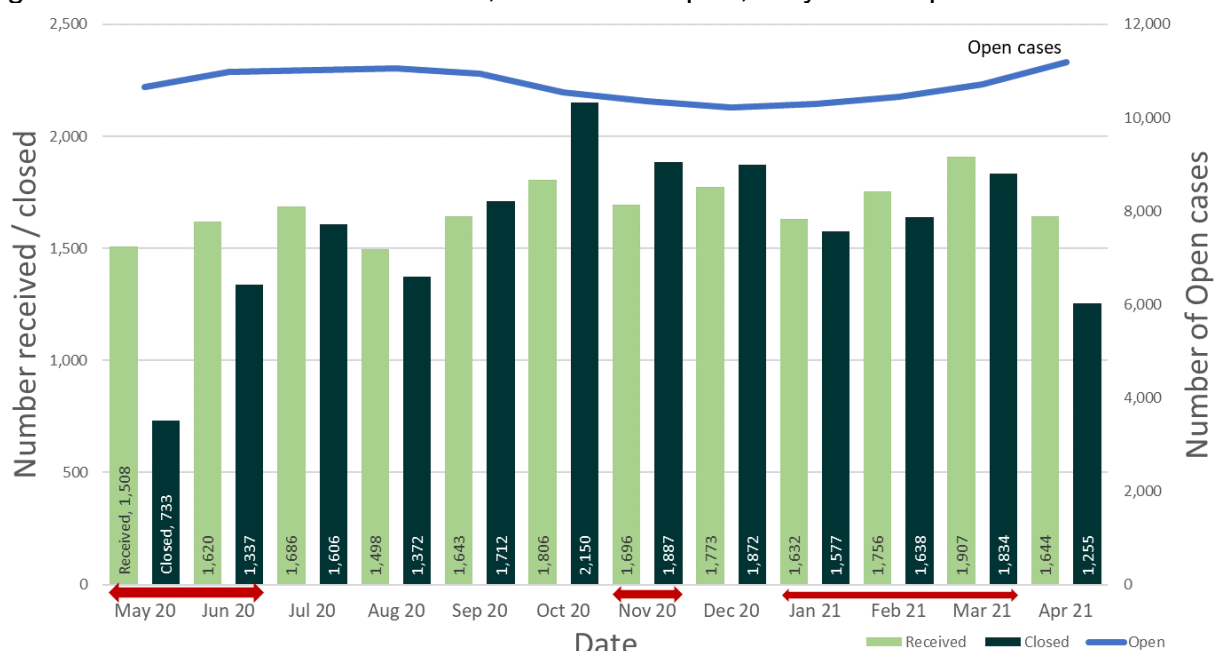
<sup>6</sup> See the section on Decision timeliness for more, including definitions of the average measures used in this release.

The number of open cases has been increasing since December 20 and increased by 4% between the end of March 21 and the end of April 21, to the highest level in the last 12 months. This contrasts with the period September to December 20, where once schools reopened and full Inspectorate capacity had returned, the number of cases being closed noticeably exceeded the number received.

The number of open cases is influenced both by capacity to carry out casework (resulting in decisions issued / cases closed) and incoming demand (cases received). As mentioned above, decisions for April 21 were low. The number received in April 21 was 16% less than the previous month. March 21 had the highest number of cases received in the last 12 months (1,907). Over the last 12 months around 1,700 cases have been received each month.

Note – The number of cases closed is higher than the number of decisions, as it includes cases where an appeal is withdrawn, notice is withdrawn, or the appeal is turned away.

Figure 2: Number of cases received, closed and open; May 20 to Apr 21



Source: Horizon and Picaso

Note – Red arrows indicate periods when national lockdowns were in effect

Table 2: Number of cases received, closed and open; May 20 to Apr 21

Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Received	1,508	1,620	1,686	1,498	1,643	1,806	1,696	1,773	1,632	1,756	1,907r	1,644	20,169
Closed	733	1,337	1,606	1,372	1,712	2,150	1,887	1,872	1,577	1,638	1,834r	1,255	18,973
Open	10,665	10,987	11,023	11,050	10,951	10,541	10,350	10,217	10,298	10,440	10,714	11,184	N/A

Source: Horizon and Picaso. r denotes revision – a change of more than 5 cases since last month (see Background Quality Report for more information)

## Number of Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate has made 16,980 appeal decisions<sup>7</sup> in the last 12 months, an average of just over 1,400 per month. Table 3 below shows the monthly breakdown with fewer decisions from May to August 2020, and for the months of January and March 2021, than would have been expected, due to the impact of national lockdowns.

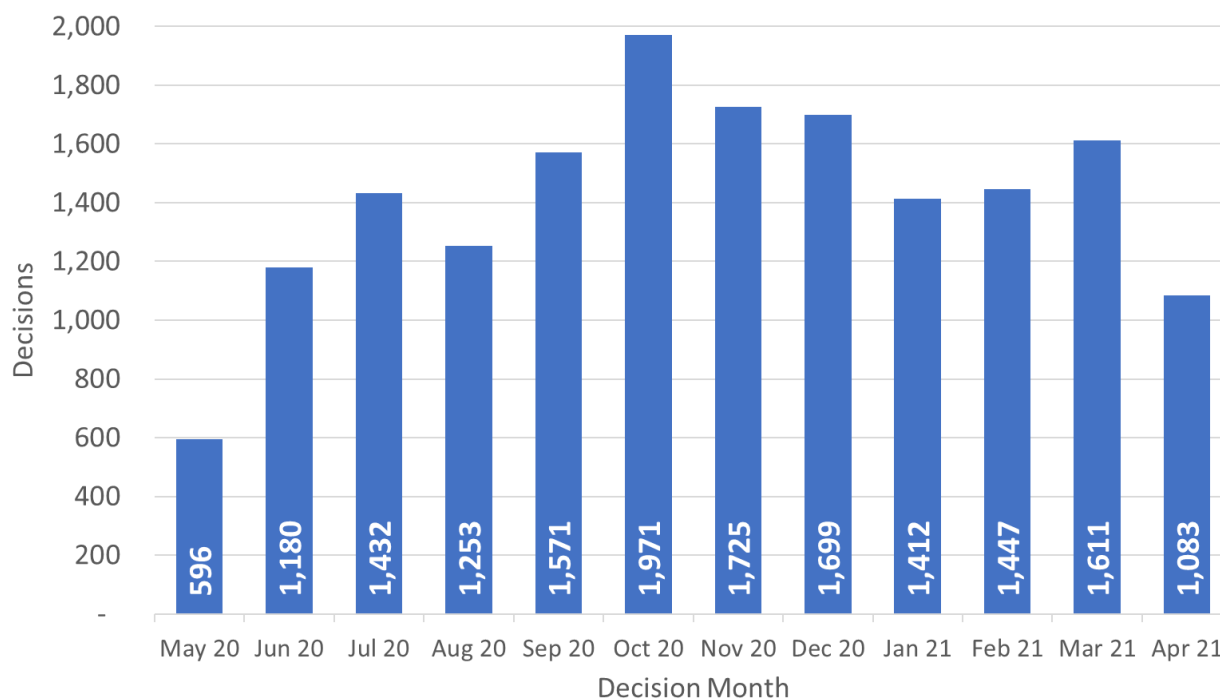
As can be seen from the table, the fewest decisions were made in May 2020 – just under six hundred decisions. Since then the number of decisions each month showed an upward trend to October 20 (with a slight dip in August linked to leave for decision makers). However, since October decisions decreased. The 1,083 decisions for April 21 was almost 33% lower than March 21. The same information is represented in Figure 3.

Table 3: Appeal Decisions; May 20 to Apr 21

Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Decisions	596	1,180	1,432	1,253	1,571	1,971	1,725	1,699	1,412	1,447	1,611	1,083	16,980

Source: Horizon and Picaso.

Figure 3 – Appeal Decisions; May 20 to Apr 21



Source: Horizon and Picaso

## Decisions by procedure and case type

Planning Inspectors work on a broader range of work than the appeals featured in this Release. For example, they also work on examining Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project applications, Local Plans<sup>8</sup>, Compulsory Purchase Order applications and many other specialist licencing/application types.

<sup>7</sup> The appeal types include planning & related appeals, Enforcement and Specialist casework (covering a range of casework types). Please note that some previous releases covered only Rights of Way orders within Specialist casework. Annex A details the scope of previous releases, Annex D the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

<sup>8</sup> Data on volumes for Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects and Local Plans can be seen here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-statistics> (Tables 1.1 and 1.2)



Table 4 below gives the numbers of appeal decisions made broken down by whether the case was dealt with by written representations, hearings, or inquiries.

The large majority of decisions (16,353) were made on written representations. This is about ninety six percent of all appeal decisions made. Table 4 shows that written representations decisions had recovered to pre-pandemic levels between September and December 20 (pre-pandemic being between approximately 1,600 and 2,000 decisions per month). January and March 21 were lower. And April 21 was significantly lower at just under 1,000.

There were 419 decisions made on hearings. Decisions for hearings for the last six months have ranged between approximately 40 and 60 per month.

There were 208 decisions made on inquiries. The 37 inquiry decisions in April 21, were the most per month in the last 12 months.

Table 4: Appeal Decisions by procedure and casework category; May 20 to Apr 21

Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Written Representations	575	1,157	1,411	1,230	1,543	1,918	1,672	1,613	1,330	1,384	1,525	995	16,353
Hearings	17	13	16	13	21	40	33	60	58	44	53	51	419
Inquiries	4	10	5	10	7	13	20	26	24	19	33	37	208
<b>Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>1,432</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>1,571</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>1,447</b>	<b>1,611</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>16,980</b>

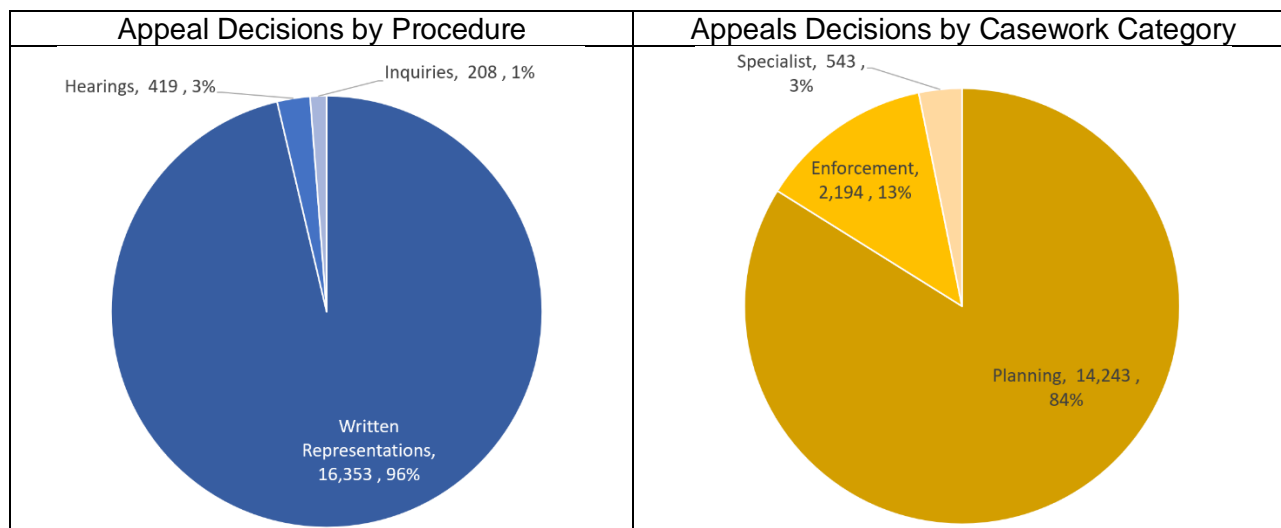
Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Planning	439	970	1,149	991	1,323	1,638	1,484	1,463	1,186	1,244	1,417	939	14,243
Enforcement	145	178	239	227	215	281	195	187	165	112	150	100	2,194
Specialist	12	32	44	35	33	52	46	49	61	91	44	44	543
<b>Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>1,432</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>1,571</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>1,447</b>	<b>1,611</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>16,980</b>

Source: Horizon and Picaso

The large majority of cases were planning (14,243). This is about eighty four per cent of all appeal decisions made. There were 2,194 enforcement decisions and 543 specialist decisions. These totals are also shown in Table 4 and Figure 4 below.

Trends for planning decisions show similar patterns to written representations. The number of enforcement decisions had been decreasing month on month since October 20, apart from March 21. Specialist casework figures continue to vary each month by a significant amount.

Figure 4 – Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; May 20 to Apr 21



Source: Horizon and Picaso

## Decision timeliness

It is important for people to know how long an appeal is going to take, so that they can make plans and decisions based on this information. This section covers the timeliness of decisions (i.e. how long it takes to make a decision) across our appeal casework. In addition to an overall measure, timeliness is analysed by procedure type and casework category, as timeliness varies a great deal depending on these characteristics.

Table 5 below shows that the mean average time to make a decision<sup>9</sup>, across all cases in the last 12 months (May 20 to Apr 21), was 27 weeks.<sup>10</sup> Figure 5 shows the mean has been above 25 weeks, with the exception of March 21, for the last 12 months.

Table 5 also shows the median time is 23 weeks. Each month the median is less than the mean; this is due to the larger impact on the mean of very long cases.

The median timeliness increased between June 20 to Nov 20, peaking at almost 27 weeks. Between December 20 to March 21 there was a reduction in the median time to decision, down to a low in March 21 of 18.9 weeks. April 21 shows an increase to 21.9 weeks.

Also included in the table is the *standard deviation* of decision timeliness. A lower standard deviation would demonstrate greater consistency in the Planning Inspectorate’s decision timeliness. The data shows that the variability was getting less towards the end of 2020 – the standard deviation values are 15.6 or lower for June to December. Data for the months in 2021 show greater variability, with a low of 15.8 weeks and a high of 18.7 weeks.

<sup>9</sup> The time to make a decision is measured from the time we judge we have enough information for the case to proceed (i.e. it is deemed 'valid') to the time a decision letter is issued. We estimate that most cases are 'validated' (the difference between receipt date and the validation process being completed) in a week or less.

<sup>10</sup> The decisions made in a given month will include those that started many months before, and thus do not give an accurate indication of how decisions submitted, or deemed 'valid' in that month, will take.

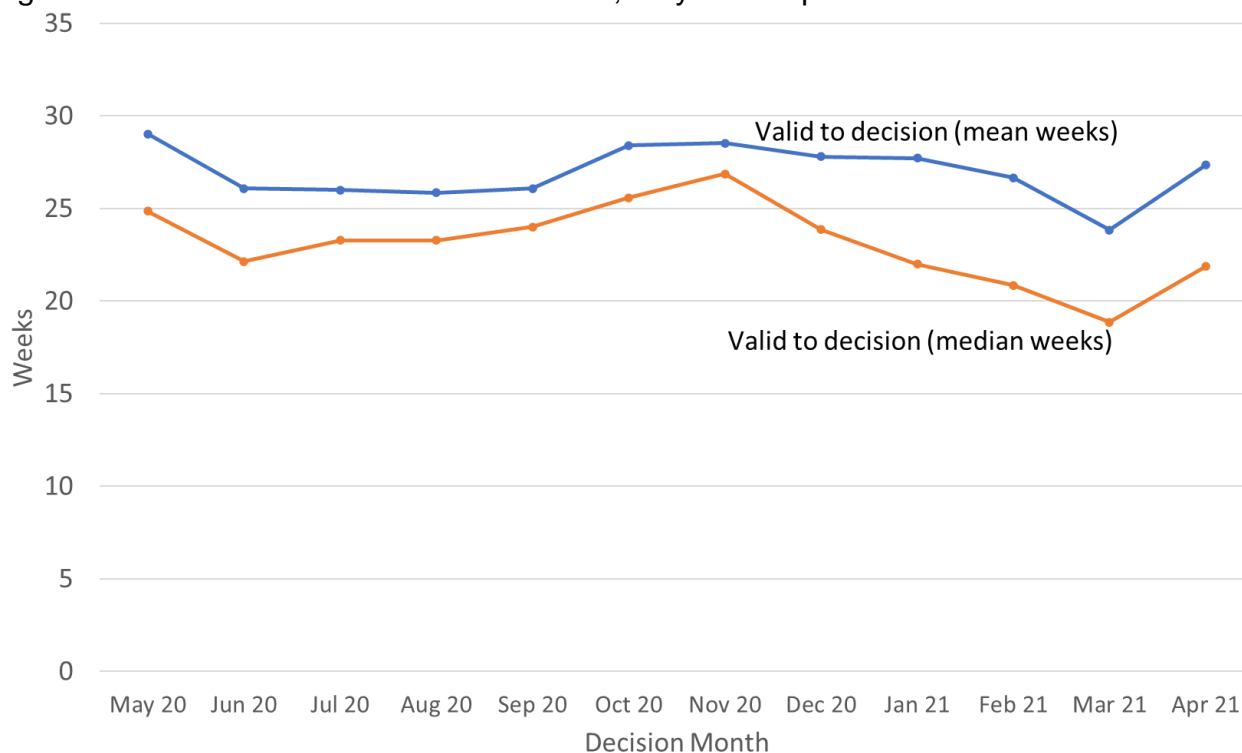
What are mean, median, and standard deviation?	
Measure	Definition
Mean	The total time taken divided by the number of cases. Also referred to as the 'average'. A measure of how long each case would take, if the total time taken was spread evenly across all cases.
Median	This is the time taken by the 'middle' case if all cases were sorted from quickest to longest
Standard deviation	This is a measure of variability or spread. It is calculated by examining how much each value differs from the mean. A higher standard deviation means the individual decision times vary more widely around the mean.

Table 5: Mean, Median and Standard Deviation of Time to Decision; Apr 20 to Mar 21

Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	29.0	26.1	26.0	25.9	26.1	28.4	28.5	27.8	27.7	26.7	23.8	27.4	27.0
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	24.9	22.1	23.3	23.3	24.0	25.6	26.9	23.9	22.0	20.9	18.9	21.9	23.0
Standard Deviation (weeks)	15.6	13.9	14.4	14.0	12.5	14.9	12.9	15.6	18.1	16.9	15.8	18.7	15.5

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Figure 5: Mean and Median time to decision; May 20 to Apr 21



Source: Horizon and Picaso

### Procedure Type

Table 6 below shows decision timeliness broken down by the procedure type. Hearings and inquires take longer than written representations – with Inquiries taking more than twice as

long as written representations. Because 19 of every 20 cases are by written representation, the timeliness measures for written representations is similar to the measure across all cases.

Where a small number of cases has been decided, the average timeliness (whether mean or median) is less meaningful as a measure than where there are many cases. Those areas shaded in the table below should be treated with caution as there are fewer than 20 cases decided.

The median time for written representations over the 12 months to April 21 is 23 weeks. The median time for inquiries over the 12 months to April 21 is over a year - 56 weeks. The median time for hearings is slightly less at 47 weeks. For each of these procedure types, the mean is higher as it is more affected by the longest cases.

Table 6: Mean and Median Time to Decision, with standard deviation, by procedure; May 20 to Apr 21

Measure	Procedure	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	Written Representations	28.1	25.3	25.6	25.4	25.6	27.9	28.0	26.6	25.8	25.3	22.0	24.1	25.8
	Hearings	50.4	63.8	56.0	43.1r	50.5	49.8	37.3	49.6	59.8	47.5	56.7	63.2	52.5
	Inquiries	73.0r	71.4	42.3	55.1	63.2	43.8	58.5	52.8	57.0	76.3	57.6	65.7	61.0
	All Cases	29.0	26.1	26.0	25.9	26.1	28.4	28.5	27.8	27.7	26.7	23.8	27.4	27.0
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	Written Representations	24.1	22.0	23.1	23.0	23.9	25.1	26.6	23.1	21.3	20.4	18.4	20.9	22.7
	Hearings	47.1	52.6	39.6	45.1r	40.3	40.1	37.3	43.9	51.5	49.0	52.4r	61.1	46.7
	Inquiries	76.6r	67.7	24.0	44.4	65.0	37.3	55.0	40.1	52.0	68.1	41.3	62.4	55.6
	All Cases	24.9	22.1	23.3	23.3	24.0	25.6	26.9	23.9	22.0	20.9	18.9	21.9	23.0
Standard Deviation (weeks)	Written Representations	14.5	12.3	13.7	13.4	11.7	14.2	12.3	14.0	15.2	14.8	12.3	13.6	13.7
	Hearings	20.3	30.7	31.8	10.7r	20.4	25.5	14.7	20.0	29.1	20.9	26.3	26.8	24.9
	Inquiries	18.2	13.2	24.0	34.0	18.5	17.4	14.0	31.0	29.8	36.9	31.3	27.6	29.6
	All Cases	15.6	13.9	14.4	14.0	12.5	14.9	12.9	15.6	18.1	16.9	15.8	18.7	15.5

Source: Horizon and Picaso. Cells shaded grey had fewer than 20 decisions. r denotes revision – a change of more than 0.5 weeks since last month

The standard deviation information indicates that for all three procedures, there is considerable variation, meaning times are widely spread about the mean. For each type, the amount of variation does not appear to be either increasing or decreasing through the year.

### Casework Category

The nature of the cases the Planning Inspectorate deal with varies widely and several factors play a part in determining how long it takes to make a decision. One such factor is the casework type. Table 7 below shows the time taken to decide, in planning cases, in enforcement cases, and in specialist<sup>11</sup> cases, as does Figure 6.

The median time to decision for planning cases (there are many more of these decisions than in the other categories) is lower than for other casework categories, apart from in May 2020. Table 7 and Figure 6 show the median time for planning cases was, apart from

<sup>11</sup> Specialist cases comprise Common Land, Rights of Way orders, Tree Preservation Orders, High Hedges appeals and Hedgerow appeals

February and March 21, above 20 weeks for the last 12 months. Across the whole year, the median time to decision is 22 weeks.

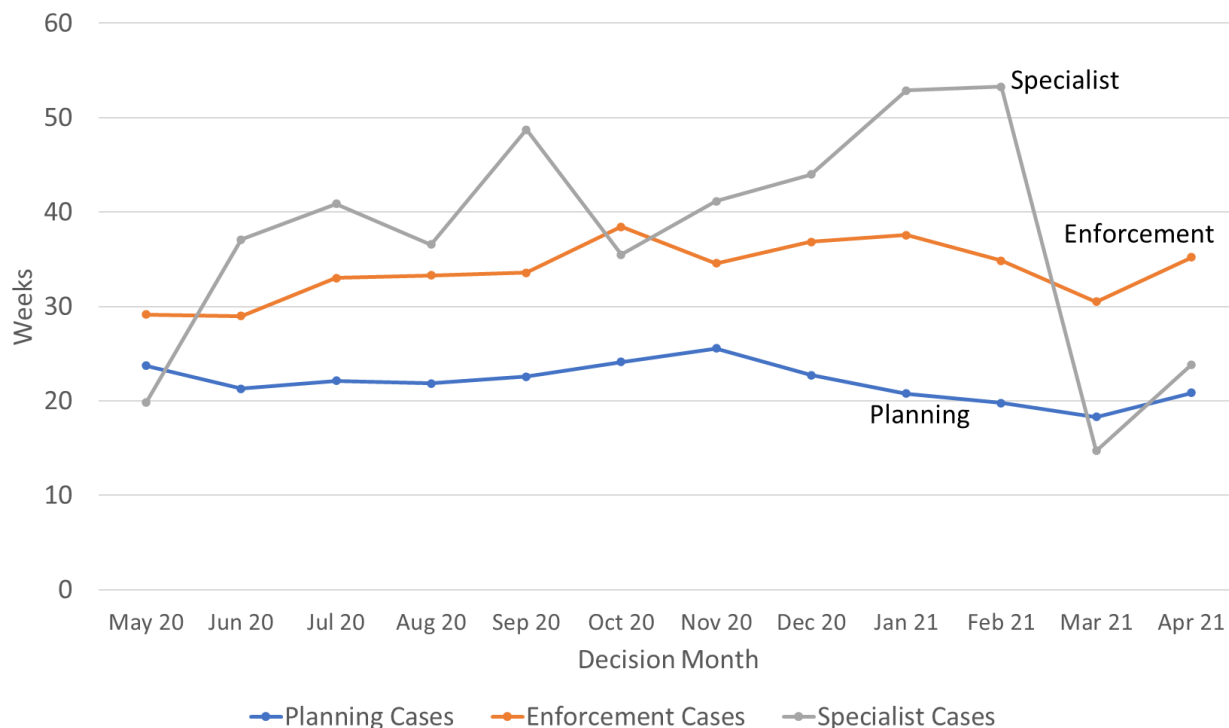
Annex B gives information on mean and median time to decision, with standard deviation, for these procedure types, split by planning, enforcement and specialist casework categories.

Table 7: Decisions, Mean, Median and Standard Deviation of Time to Decision – Planning, Enforcement, Specialist Cases; May 20 to Apr 21

Casework Category	Measure	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Planning Cases	Valid to Decision (mean wks)	27.1	23.5	22.9	23.0	23.7	25.6	27.0	25.4	24.6	23.2	21.9	24.7	24.4
	Valid to Decision (median wks)	23.7	21.3	22.1	21.9	22.6	24.1	25.6	22.7	20.8	19.8	18.3	20.9	21.9
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	14.4	10.0	9.6	11.4	9.8	11.3	11.3	12.3	12.3	11.6	12.3	14.6	11.9
Enforcement Cases	Valid to Decision (mean wks)	34.5	37.5	38.0	36.8	37.5	42.8	37.7	42.1	43.7	42.7	41.6	47.6	39.8
	Valid to Decision (median wks)	29.1	29.0	33.0	33.3	33.6	38.4	34.6	36.9	37.6	34.9	30.5	35.2	33.7
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	17.6r	21.3	22.6	17.3	15.5	20.5	16.8	23.0	28.9	26.7	26.2	29.4	22.0
Specialist Cases	Valid to Decision (mean wks)	32.3	40.6	42.3	36.9r	47.0	38.8	39.4	44.3	46.1	53.7	25.5	37.8	40.9
	Valid to Decision (median wks)	19.9	37.1	40.9	36.6r	48.7	35.5	41.1	44.0	52.9	53.3	14.7	23.9	37.2
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	18.5	23.1	17.2	17.5	24.3	26.4	18.3	25.4	33.7	24.8	25.8	30.7	25.8

Source: Horizon and Picaso. Cells shaded grey had fewer than 20 decisions. r denotes revision – a change of more than 0.5 weeks since last month. P means the data is provisional.

Figure 6 – Median time to decision by casework area; Apr 20 to Mar 21



Source: Horizon and Picaso

Enforcement decisions made in the last 12 months had a median decision time of 34 weeks. For the last 12 months the mean is 40 weeks. The median time for enforcement decisions is longer than the median decision time for planning cases.

There are considerably fewer specialist cases which means results are more liable to be distorted by extreme values. Looking at the annual totals, the median and mean time to decision for specialist decisions are broadly the same as for enforcement decisions, and longer than the median for planning decisions. Performance in February 21 was influenced by a high number of older Tree Preservation Order (TPO) cases being decided in the month. Since then a higher proportion of much more recent TPO cases were decided in March and April 21.

Note that the Inspectorate publishes each month, information on the mean and median times from valid to decision, for selected appeal types. The information published also breaks down the time for each stage of the process. See Annex C<sup>12</sup> for further details.

### Planning Inquiry Decisions

For planning appeals decided by the inquiry process, The Planning Inspectorate has been implementing recommendations from the Rosewell review.

The median time for inquiries over the 12 months to April 21 is 39 weeks, with the mean being marginally higher at 41 weeks. With the exception of February 21, decision volumes have been above ten per month since Dec 20.

Table 8: Decisions, Mean and Median Time to Decision, Planning Inquiry cases under Rosewell process; May 20 to Apr 21

Measure	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Decisions	1	0	3	5	2	7	7	18	13	8	15	17	96
Mean (weeks)	47.0	-	22.7	42.5	41.1	45.7	45.7	35.3	36.5	40.7	36.7	53.5	40.9
Median (weeks)	47.0	-	23.4	45.6	41.1	32.6	50.9	39.4	40.3	40.7	33.7	51.9	39.4
St. Dev. (weeks)	-	-	1.4	16.0	1.1	22.1	9.1	10.2	12.2	7.9	12.0	31.1	18.4

Source: Horizon

Most inquiry decisions now being issued are under the revised 'Rosewell'<sup>13</sup> process, but we are still deciding those under the previous process.

Table 9: Decisions, Planning Inquiry cases under non-Rosewell process; May 20 to Apr 21

Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Decisions	1	2	0	1	0	1	5	0	1	1	1	1	14

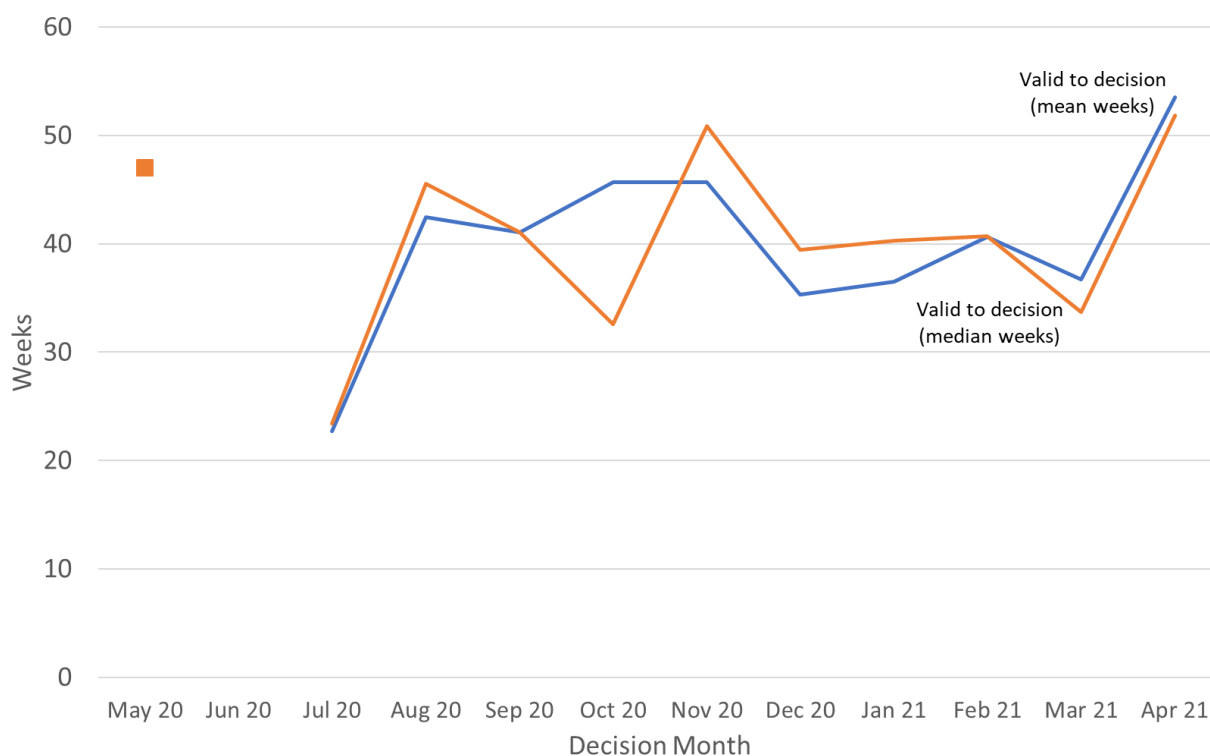
Source: Horizon

Figure 7 below shows the mean and median time to decision for planning inquiry cases under the Rosewell process.

<sup>12</sup> Data also published on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeals-average-timescales-for-arranging-inquiries-and-hearings>

<sup>13</sup> The 'Rosewell' process introduced changes to how the inquiry event date was agreed and a firm timetable for submission of documentation. Further information on what the Rosewell Review concluded is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-planning-appeal-inquiries-report>

Figure 7: Mean, Median Time to Decision, Rosewell Inquiry Process; May 20 to Apr 21



Source: Horizon

Note – 1 decision was made in May 20, with a mean & median timeliness of 47 weeks. No decisions were made during June 2020

## Open Cases

At the end of April 21, the Planning Inspectorate had over eleven thousand one hundred cases open<sup>14</sup> (11,184). This is an increase of 470 (4%), from the previous month. The open cases comprised 9,300 cases being handled through written representations; just over a 1,000 through hearings; and 675 through inquiries. This is not the number of 'live' hearings and inquiries since it includes cases where the event (hearing or inquiry) has yet to start, as well as those where the event has finished but the decision has yet to be issued.

For each procedure type, there are more cases with an event scheduled but not yet started, than at any other stage in the process. Event refers to either a site visit, hearing or inquiry.

<sup>14</sup> Open cases are any that have been received but on which a decision has not yet been made/ issued. Cases included comprise Planning, Enforcement, and the following Specialist cases: Common Land, Environment, Purchase Notice and Rights of Way. Tree Preservation Orders, Hedgerows and High Hedges cases are excluded.

Table 10: Open cases by procedure and stage, as of end of April 2021

Procedure	Case received but yet to be deemed valid	Case deemed valid, event date yet to be set / in the future	Event complete but decision not yet issued	Total
Written Representations	666	7322	1,408	9,396
Hearings	57	815	142	1,014
Inquiries	9	525	141	675
<b>Total</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>8,750</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>11,184</b>

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Note there are 99 cases that have no procedure type recorded (see Background Quality Report for more detail)

## Inspectors

Table 11 below shows the number of inspectors in the Planning Inspectorate in each month from May 20 and April 21<sup>15</sup>. This includes headcount (i.e. the number of different individuals) and full-time equivalents (FTE) where those working part time are counted in proportion with their contracted hours. There were 355 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in April 21 – with a full-time equivalent of 317. A small number (six) of recently recruited Inspectors, as part of planned recruitment, started in April 21.

By both measures (headcount and FTE) the maximum Inspector resource in the last 12 months was in May 20; and by both, the number at the end of January 21 was the lowest.

Table 11: Planning Inspectors – Headcount and FTE; May 20 to Apr 21 (at end of month)

Month	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21
Headcount	356	356	355	352	352	347	345	345	343	345	352	355
FTE	319.1	319.0	318.2	316.0	316.4	310.0	308.1	308.1	305.4	308.1	314.4	317.0

Source: SAP HR

As above, Planning Inspectors work on a broader range of work than the appeals featured in this Release. They also work on applications and examinations. Please note that data on Planning Inspectors is only applicable to salaried employees (it does not include fixed term contract Inspectors or non-salaried Inspectors).

## Virtual Events<sup>16</sup>

The Planning Inspectorate has continued moving casework forward during the pandemic by adapting the ways of working so that examinations, hearings and inquiries (which would previously have been held face-to-face) could take place virtually.

<sup>15</sup> Data as at the last day of the month.

<sup>16</sup> Virtual Events data includes casework types not covered elsewhere in this release, including Local Plans and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.



The Inspectorate are continuing to increase the number of events carried out 'virtually'. The table and graph below give the number of virtual events that have occurred each month. There were 82 cases involving Virtual Events during April 21. This is lower than previous and may have been influenced by decision makers taking annual leave around the Easter holiday period.

### Data quality and corrections

There are concerns about the quality and accuracy of the data collection methods for virtual events data. We are reviewing the quality and methodology of how we record this data. See the Background Quality Report for further information.

Table 12: Virtual Events, Jun-20 to Apr-21<sup>P</sup>

Case Type	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21
s78 Hearings	8	11	18	36	41	43	35	33	23	29	29
s78 Inquiries	4	6	4	11	11	17	16	13	13	20	13
Enforcement	0	1	3	9	15	18	20	29	35	29	27
Local Plans	1	2	3	7	14	12	12	5	7	9	5
National Infrastructure	3 (3)	1 (3)	1 (2)	2 (3)	10 (30)	3 (9)	6 (18)	3 (7)	4 (8)	2 (2)	3 (1)
Other	0	1	0	0	4	16	6	11	7	8	5
Total	16 (16)	22 (24)	29 (30)	65 (66)	95 (115)	109 (115)	95 (107)	94 (98)	89 (93)	97 (97)	82 (80)

Source: Virtual Events 'Triage' data and SharePoint list, data as at 13/05/21

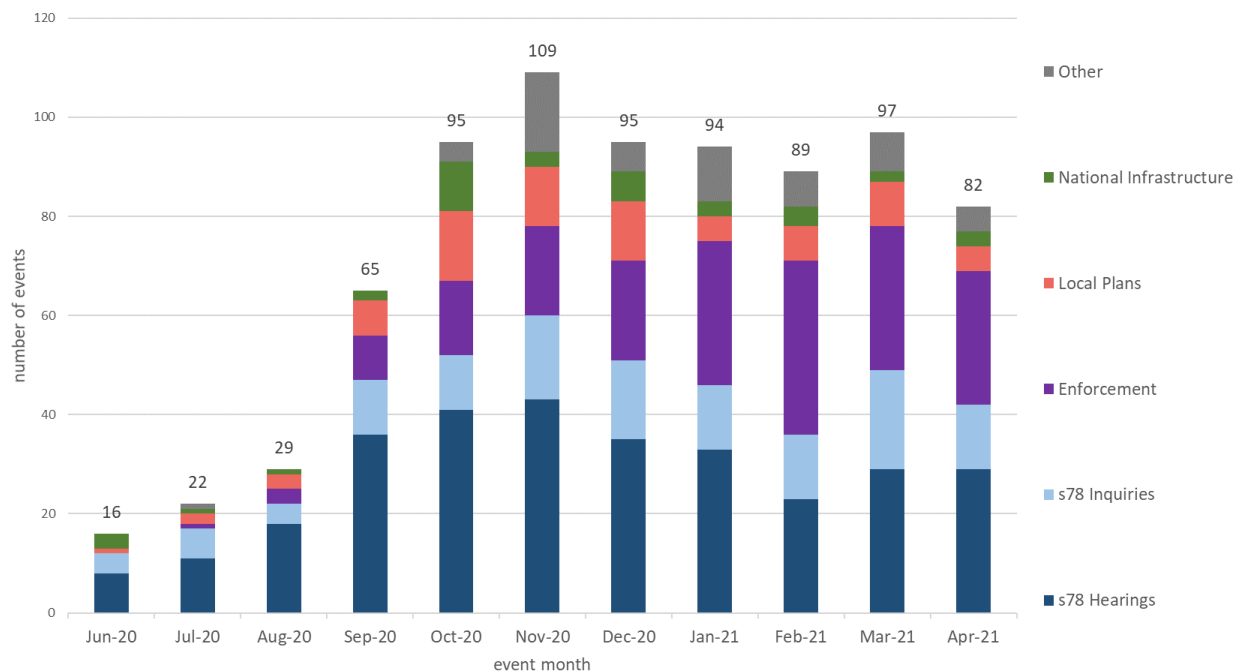
Numbers in brackets show count of events but note concerns above over counting sessions on same day.

Local Plans are counted as cases where at least one sitting day occurred in a month.

Other case type includes specialist casework like Environmental appeals, Transport examinations and Rights of Way cases

P – These numbers should be treated as provisional due to concerns about quality and accuracy.

Figure 8: Virtual Events; Jun 19 to Apr 21 <sup>P</sup>



Source: Virtual Events ‘Triage’ data and SharePoint list, data as at 13/05/21  
 P – These numbers should be treated as provisional.

Note – some cases can have multiple ‘events’ – for example an inquiry may sit over four to eight days but would only be counted as one ‘event’. On the other hand, casework like National Infrastructure may have multiple events for the same project. For Local Plans, cases are counted as having held a virtual event, if at least one sitting day occurred that month.

For National Infrastructure, the number given in the table is the number of projects that have held virtual events. The number in brackets is the number of individual events but this is potentially misleading as multiple sessions on the same day (e.g. morning and afternoon sessions) have been counted as separate events.

## Quarterly & Annual Volume Statistics

The Inspectorate has also published today a series of tables showing how many cases have been received, decided, and allowed. This data has been published on a quarterly basis for many years as management information.

The quarterly and annual volume statistics differ from the monthly statistical release. Some of the data published is on casework types that The Planning Inspectorate deals with, that are larger in scale but smaller in volume. The best examples of this are Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and Local Plans, where volumes never go into the hundreds, and can the time between submission to report issue can be over a year. Other data breaks appeals down into more detail than in the monthly totals.

All tables can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-statistics>

We are seeking feedback! Do you have any thoughts on whether data in this section should also be shown on a quarterly basis? Are there casework types you would like to be shown? There are also specific questions for readers in this section. If you have any thoughts please let us know at [statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

### Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

The number of NSIP applications submitted for examination per year varied from as low as three to a high of twenty-three projects. In 2020/21 nine projects were submitted. The process of accepting an application, the necessary consultation, examination and then submitting a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State takes usually over a year to complete. This explains the reason for an increase in decision submitted for the year 2019/20, following the highest submission of projects the previous financial year. The types of NSIP applications submitted are mainly in the Energy or Transport sectors.

Figure 9: NSIP applications submitted

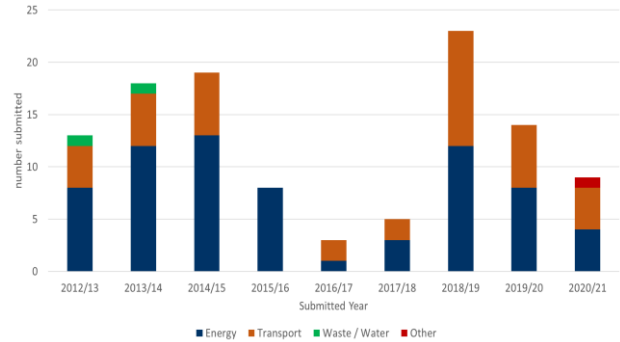
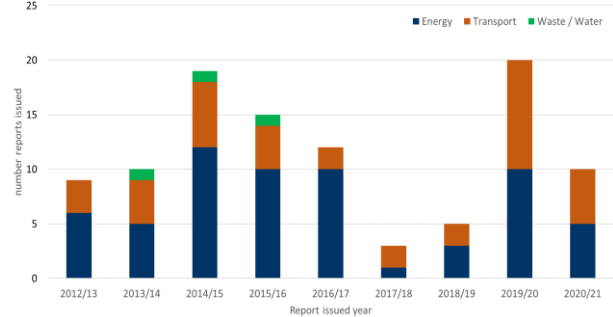


Figure 10: NSIP application report issued



Source: NSIP spreadsheet. Full published data is available at Table 1.1 Infrastructure

Table 13: NSIP applications submitted, 2012/13 to 2020/21

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Energy	8	12	13	8	1	3	12	8	4
Transport	4	5	6	0	2	2	11	6	4
Waste / Water	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	13	18	19	8	3	5	23	14	9

Table 14: NSIP applications reports issued, 2012/13 to 2020/21

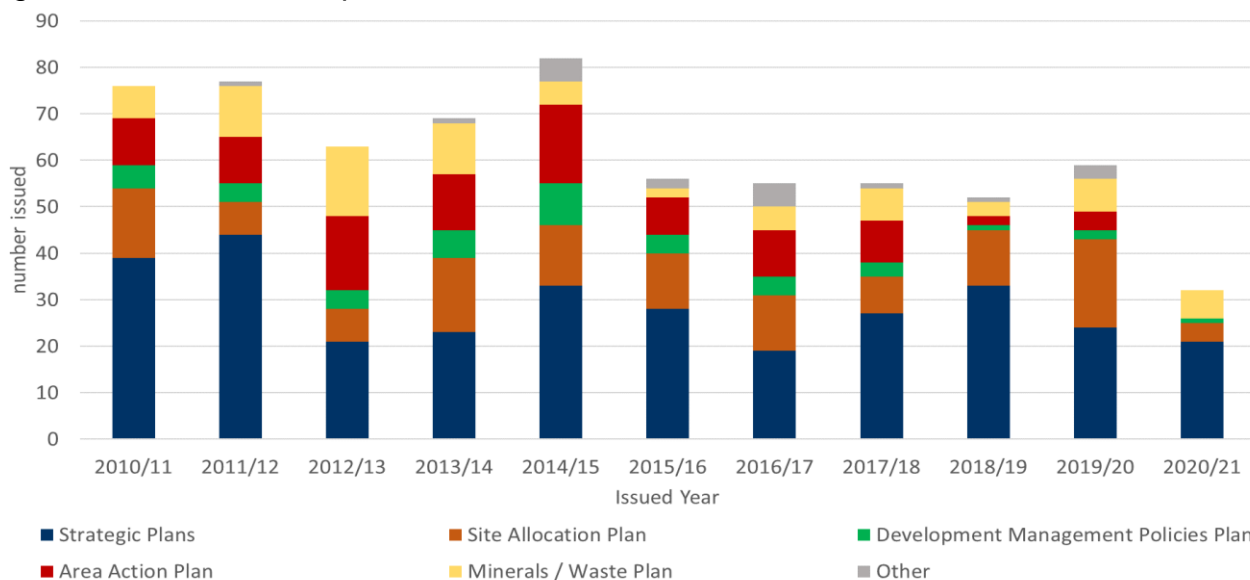
Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Energy	6	5	12	10	10	1	3	10	5
Transport	3	4	6	4	2	2	2	10	5
Waste / Water	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	9	10	19	15	12	3	5	20	10

Question for readers of this release – Is there any other data that you would like to see about Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in future statistical releases?

## Local Plans

Plans are submitted to The Planning Inspectorate by Local Planning Authorities for examination, with an Inspector submitting a report at the end of the process. There are different types of ‘plan’ that are counted in the casework group of Local Plans. Figure 11 shows that in many years strategic plans represent the highest category within Local Plans, followed by site allocation and area action plans. The lower number of plan reports submitted in 2020/21 reflects a slowdown in submissions of plans for examination.

Figure 11: Local Plans reports issued, 2010/11 to 2020/21



Source – Local Plans Team spreadsheet. Full published data is available in Table 1.2 Local Plans.

Table 15: Local Plan reports issued, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Strategic Plans	39	44	21	23	33	28	19	27	33	24	21
Site Allocation Plan	15	7	7	16	13	12	12	8	12	19	4
Development Management Policies Plan	5	4	4	6	9	4	4	3	1	2	1
Area Action Plan	10	10	16	12	17	8	10	9	2	4	0
Minerals / Waste Plan	7	11	15	11	5	2	5	7	3	7	6
Other	0	1	0	1	5	2	5	1	1	3	0
TOTAL	76	77	63	69	82	56	55	55	52	59	32

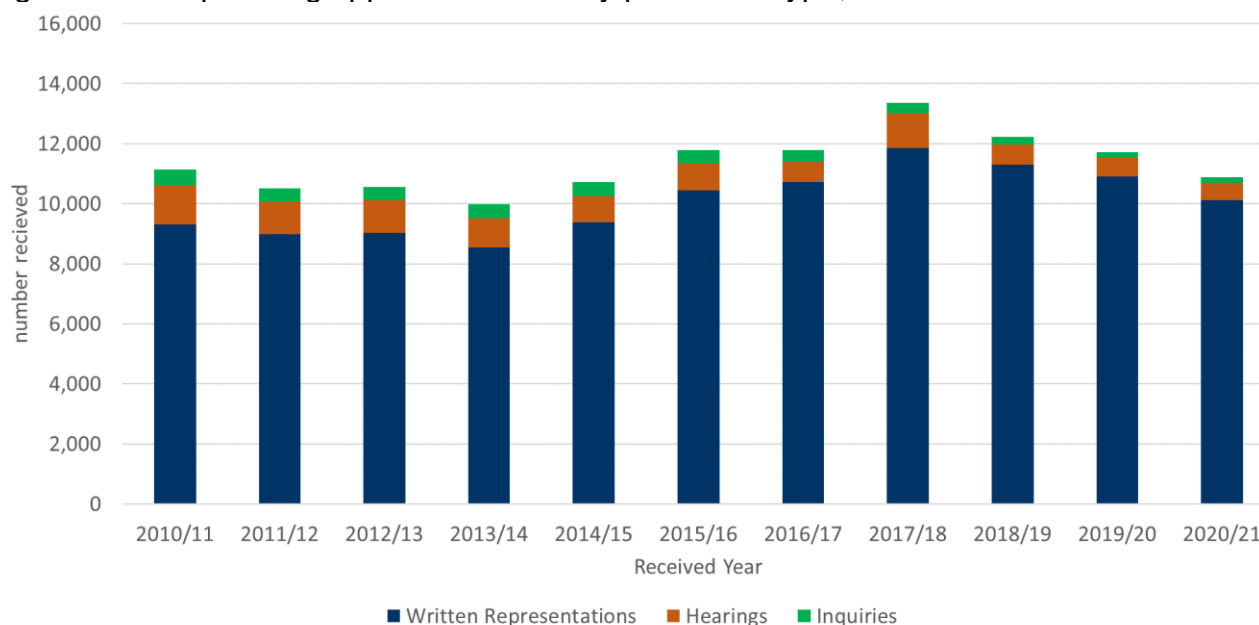
Question for readers of this release – Is there any other data that you would like to see about Local Plans in future statistical releases?

## Section 78 Planning appeals<sup>17</sup>

### Received

The largest number of appeals that The Planning Inspectorate receives each year is for Section 78 (s78) planning appeals. Figure 12 below shows that total volumes in the last eleven years peaked in 2017/18 at 13,362. In 2020/21 the number received was 10,886, 7% lower than the previous year. Most s78 planning appeals received are dealt with by the written representation process.

Figure 12: s78 planning appeals received by procedure type, 2010/11 to 2020/21



Source: Horizon and Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.1 s78 planning appeals received by procedure type

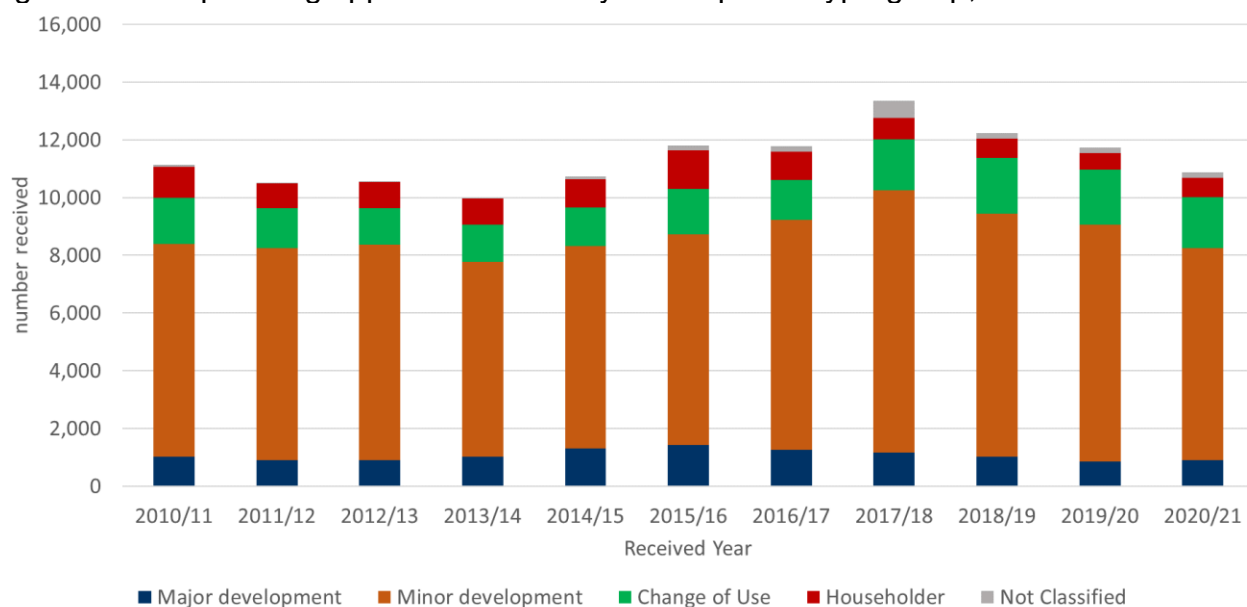
<sup>17</sup> s78 planning appeals are the highest volume of appeals the Inspectorate receives. These are appeals against refusal of planning application, conditions attached to a planning application approval on non-decision within the specified time period of a planning application by a local planning authority

Table 16: s78 planning appeals received by procedure type, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Written Representations	9,320	8,984	9,043	8,543	9,388	10,445	10,722	11,846	11,300	10,917	10,131
Hearings	1,318	1,091	1,067	964	865	907	670	1,171	669	617	563
Inquiries	502	439	452	480	471	446	401	345	270	190	192
TOTAL	11,140	10,514	10,562	9,987	10,724	11,798	11,793	13,362	12,239	11,724	10,886

As Figure 12 above shows, most appeals received are dealt with by the written representation process. Figure 13 below shows that most appeals received are for minor development proposals.

Figure 13: s78 planning appeals received by development type group, 2010/11 to 2020/21



Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.2 s78 planning appeals received by development type group. Note – Not classified refers to records with no development type recorded on source systems.

Table 17: s78 planning appeals received by development type group, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Major development	1,010	891	907	1,033	1,319	1,418	1,261	1,168	1,030	853	908
Minor development	7,389	7,356	7,460	6,745	7,001	7,304	7,973	9,077	8,416	8,219	7,347
Change of Use	1,604	1,375	1,260	1,287	1,340	1,577	1,368	1,763	1,920	1,888	1,761
Householder	1,073	870	917	908	969	1,327	978	749	679	592	674
Not Classified	64	22	18	14	95	171	212	605	194	172	196
TOTAL	11,140	10,514	10,562	9,987	10,724	11,797	11,792	13,362	12,239	11,724	10,886

Note – Not classified refers to records with no development type recorded on source systems.

## Decided

The number of s78 planning appeal decisions in 2020/21 was 32% lower (or 4,000 decisions) than the previous year. This was because 2019/20 saw the highest number of decisions in the last eleven years as the Inspectorate caught up with backlogs built up in previous years. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a big impact in 2020/21, with fewer events being arranged and therefore fewer decisions.

Figure 14: s78 appeals decided by procedure type, 2010/11 to 2020/21

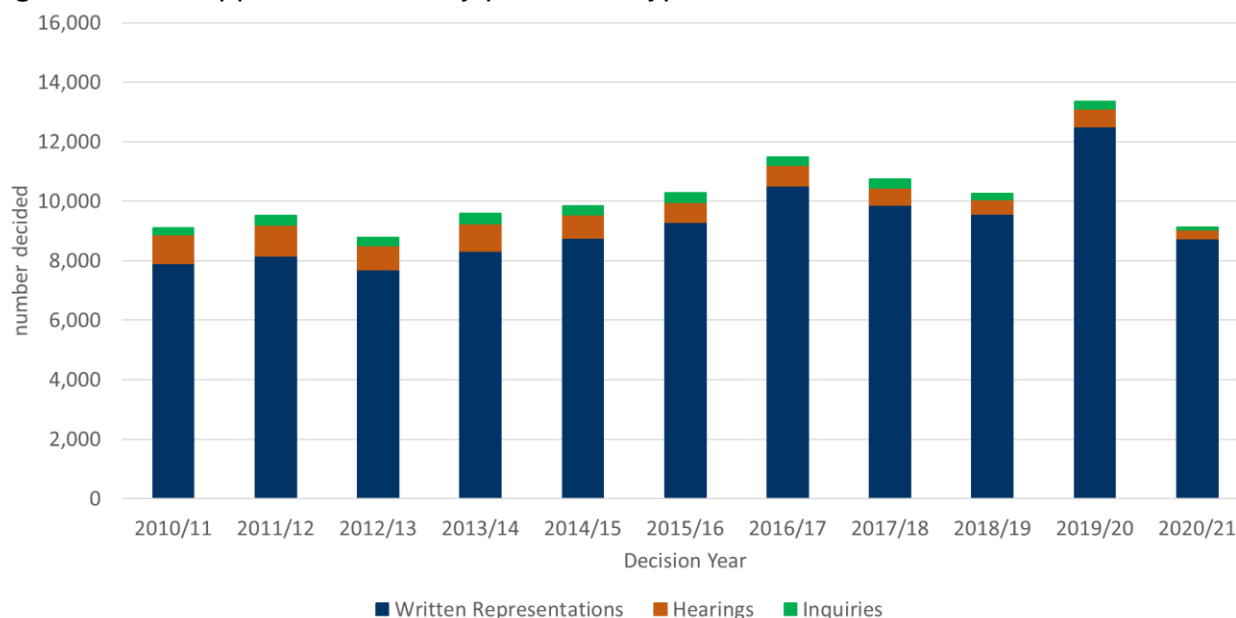


Table 18: s78 appeals decided by procedure type, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Written Representations	7,906	8,152	7,705	8,330	8,768	9,283	10,508	9,867	9,558	12,492	8,728
Hearings	975	1,045	794	918	769	684	690	581	497	616	306
Inquiries	219	318	283	344	309	314	295	293	211	246	87
TOTAL	9,100	9,515	8,782	9,592	9,846	10,281	11,493	10,741	10,266	13,354	9,121

## Appeals Allowed

The percentage of planning appeals that have been allowed in 2020/21 was 25%. This was the same as the year before. Looking over the last eleven years, the percentage allowed has been 30% or more except for the last two financial years.

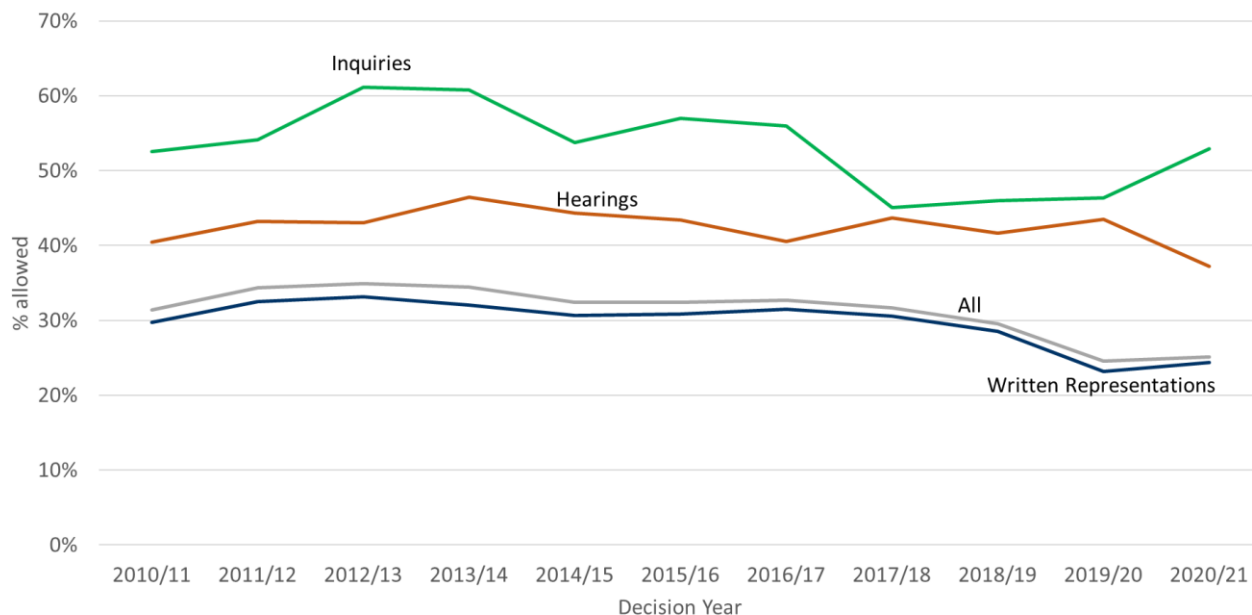
There were significant reductions<sup>18</sup> in the percentage of planning appeals allowed in Oct 2018 - Mar 2021, compared to Jan 2015 – Sep 2018. In Apr 2020 – Mar 2021, the percentage of planning appeals allowed generally stabilised (i.e. was not significantly different to the previous year). There has, however, been a significant increase in the percentage of written representation planning appeals allowed in Apr 2020 – Mar 2021.

The overall percentage allowed is heavily influenced by the number of written representations appeals allowed, as this procedure type contributes by far the greatest

<sup>18</sup> Statistical comparisons made between approval rates in different time periods, using the chi squared test. Significant change identified with a 'p value' less than 0.05 - i.e. 95% chance that the difference in approval rate is not due to random variation.

number of decisions each year. There has been slightly more variation in the percentage allowed for hearings and inquiries.

Figure 15: s78 planning appeals, percentage allowed by procedure type, 2010/11 to 2020/21



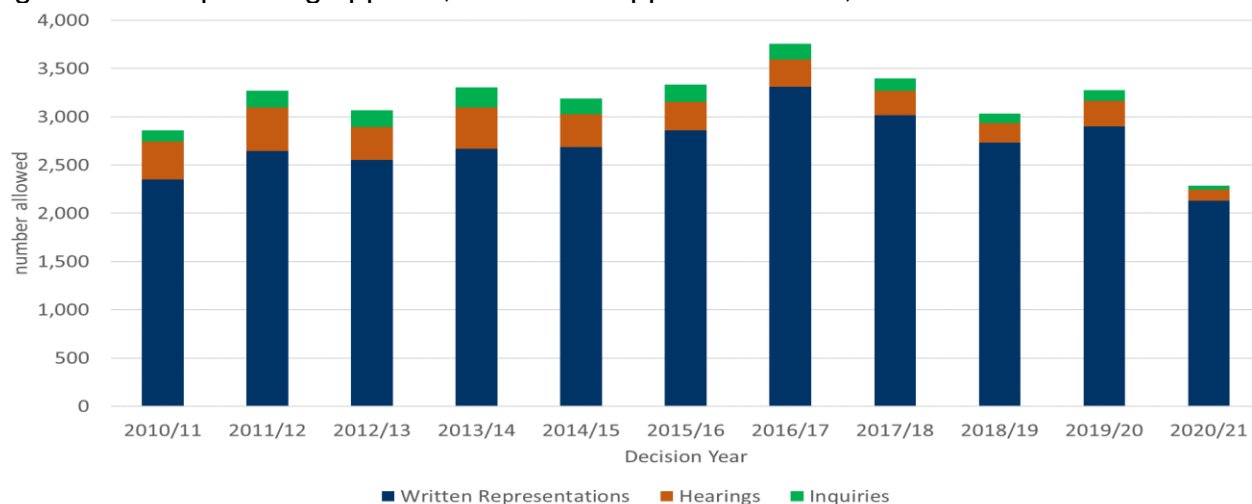
Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.4 s78 planning appeals decided.

Table 19: s78 planning appeals, percentage allowed by procedure type, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Written Representations	30%	32%	33%	32%	31%	31%	32%	31%	29%	23%	24%
Hearings	40%	43%	43%	46%	44%	43%	41%	44%	42%	44%	37%
Inquiries	53%	54%	61%	61%	54%	57%	56%	45%	46%	46%	53%
ALL	31%	34%	35%	34%	32%	32%	33%	32%	30%	25%	25%

The number of appeals allowed in 2020/21 was far less than previous years, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on overall decision outputs.

Figure 16: s78 planning appeals, number of appeals allowed, 2010/11 to 2020/21



Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.4 s78 planning appeals decided.



Table 20: s78 planning appeals, number of appeals allowed, 2010/11 to 2020/21

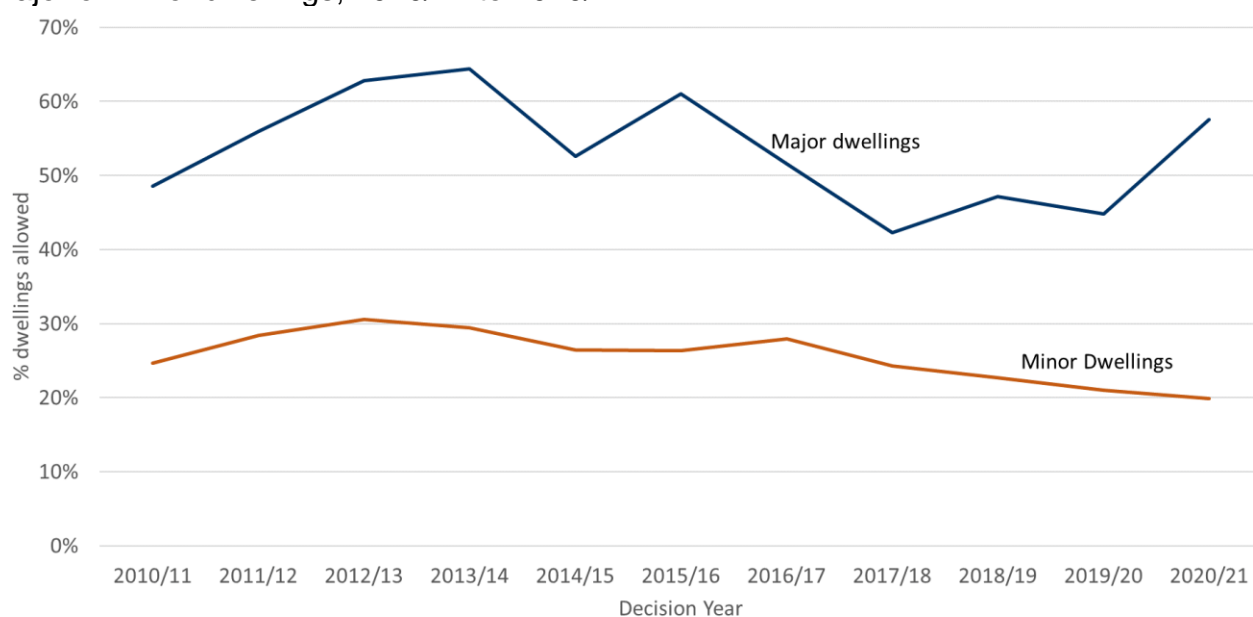
Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Written Representations	2,348	2,646	2,553	2,668	2,684	2,859	3,312	3,014	2,730	2,897	2,129
Hearings	394	452	342	426	341	297	280	254	207	268	114
Inquiries	115	172	173	209	166	179	165	132	97	114	46
ALL	2,857	3,270	3,068	3,303	3,191	3,335	3,757	3,400	3,034	3,279	2,289

### Dwellings allowed

Appeals for dwellings (often referred to as houses but in this measure, for example, a development of eight flats counts as eight dwellings) form a significant part of the Inspectorate's output. Figures 17 and 18 show the percentage of dwellings allowed, and number of dwellings allowed, over the last eleven years.

Note – major dwellings are appeals for 10 or more dwellings.

Figure 17: s78 planning appeals involving dwellings, percentage of dwellings allowed by major or minor dwellings, 2010/11 to 2020/21

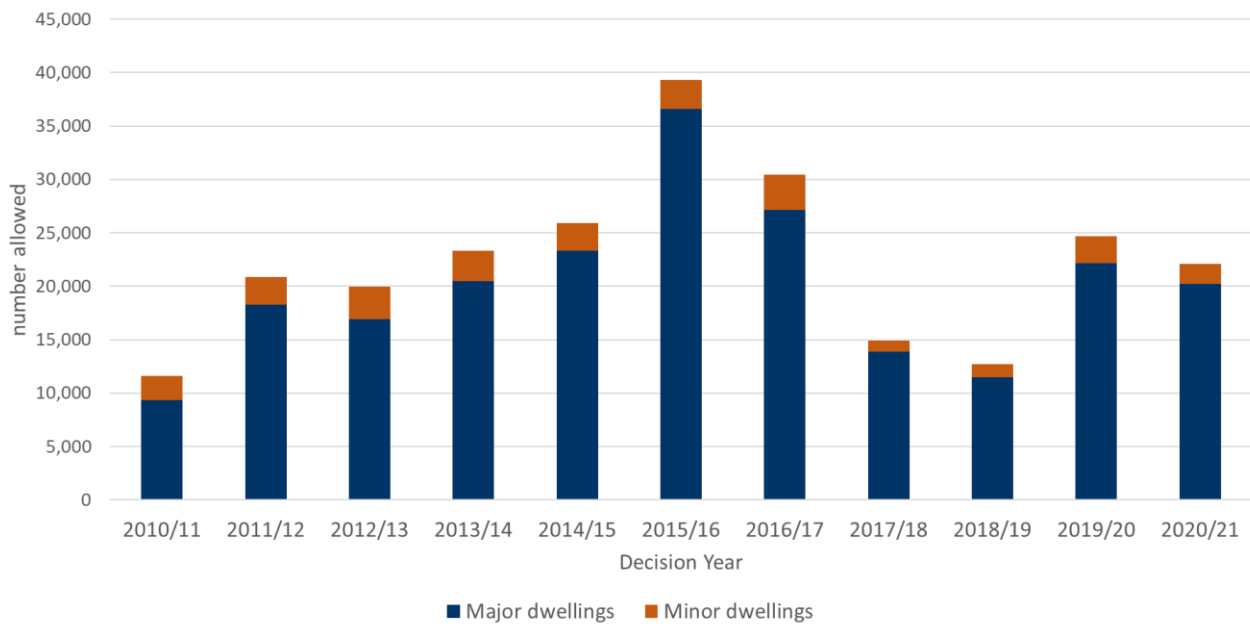


Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.5 s78 planning appeals involving dwellings.

Table 21: s78 planning appeals involving dwellings, percentage of dwellings allowed by major or minor dwellings, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Major dwellings	49%	56%	63%	64%	53%	61%	52%	42%	47%	45%	58%
Minor dwellings	25%	28%	31%	29%	26%	26%	28%	24%	23%	21%	20%

Figure 18: s78 planning appeals involving dwellings, number of dwellings allowed by major or minor dwellings, 2010/11 to 2020/21



Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.5 s78 planning appeals involving dwellings.

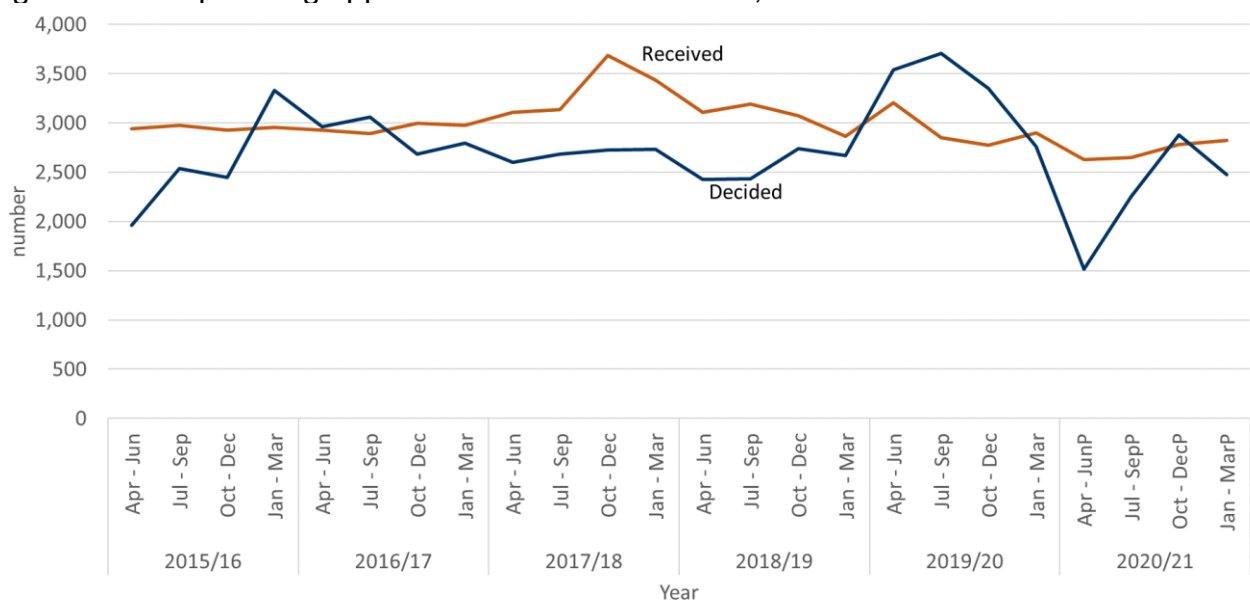
Table 22: s78 planning appeals involving dwellings, number of dwellings allowed by major or minor dwellings, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Major dwellings	9,350	18,240	16,879	20,455	23,322	36,573	27,144	13,866	11,447	22,122	20,192
Minor dwellings	2,228	2,622	3,080	2,846	2,613	2,739	3,264	1,032	1,238	2,558	1,921
TOTAL	11,578	20,862	19,959	23,301	25,935	39,312	30,408	14,898	12,685	24,680	22,113

### Appeals received versus decided

To ensure consistency, Figure 21 is provided below, as it has been in previous published releases that have accompanied quarterly and annual volume statistics.

Figure 19: s78 planning appeals received and decided, 2010/11 to 2020/21



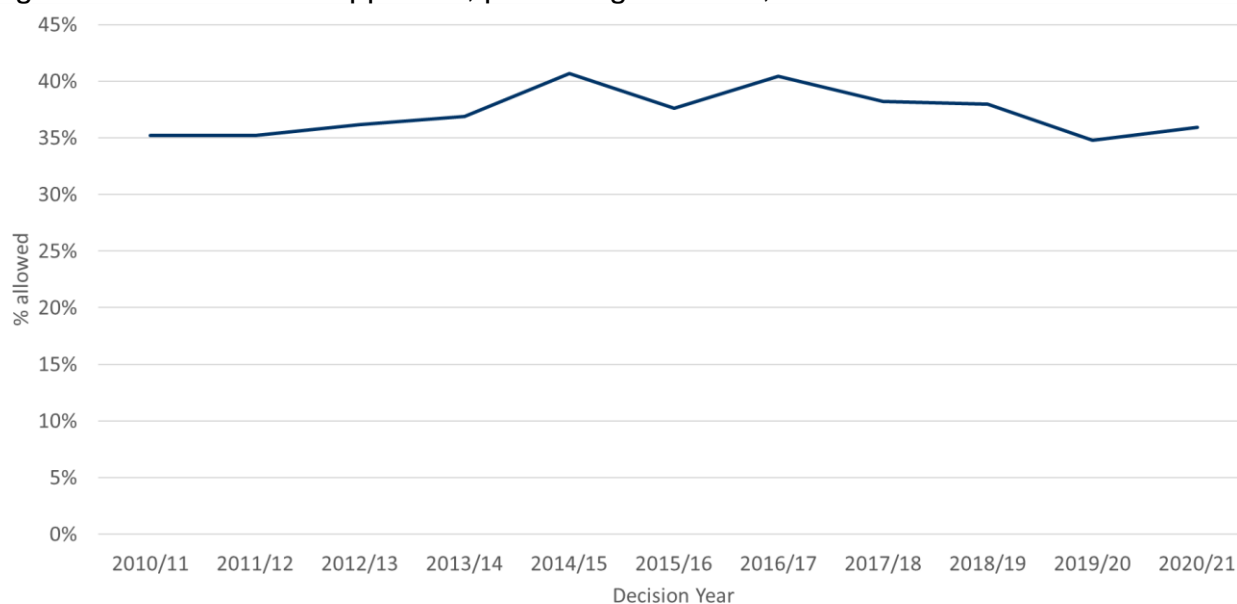
Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Tables 2.1 and Table 2.4. See Annex D for full data table.

## Householder appeals allowed

After s78 planning appeals, Householder appeals are the highest volume of appeals received each year. Householder appeals are for small scale development. We also receive some larger proposals that are categorised as householder but decided under the s78 planning appeal process. The householder appeals process requires less documentation to be submitted.

In terms of the proportion of householder appeals allowed, over the last eleven years the percentage allowed has varied between 35% and 41%. In 2020/21 36% of householder decisions were allowed.

Figure 20: Householder appeals<sup>19</sup>, percentage allowed, 2010/11 to 2020/21



Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.6 Householder appeals received, decided and allowed

Table 23: Householder appeals, percentage allowed, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
% allowed	35%	35%	36%	37%	41%	38%	40%	38%	38%	35%	36%

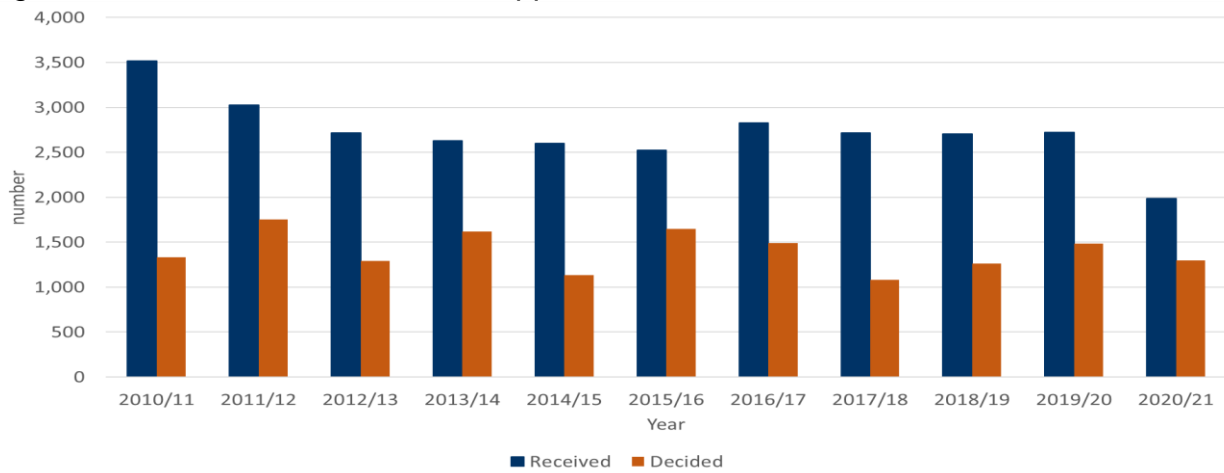
## Section 174 enforcement appeals<sup>20</sup>, received & decided

The third largest number of appeals received are for s174 enforcement notice appeals. These are appeals against enforcement notices issued by Local Planning Authorities, alleging activity that does not have planning permission. Received volumes reduced by 27% between 2020/21 and 2019/20; this was a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and fewer enforcement notices being issued by local authorities.

<sup>19</sup> Householder appeals are received for appeals against refusal of a householder development application (or conditions attached to an approval, or non-decision within the specified time period of a planning application by a local planning authority)

<sup>20</sup> s174 enforcement notice appeals are received where a local planning authority has issued an enforcement notice (alleging activity that does not have permission) and a person who has received the notice has appealed to The Planning Inspectorate.

Figure 21: s174 enforcement notice appeals received and decided, 2010/11 to 2020/21



Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Tables 3.1 & 3.2

Table 24: s174 enforcement notice appeals received and decided, 2010/11 to 2020/21

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
received	3,517	3,024	2,718	2,627	2,599	2,526	2,825	2,719	2,706	2,723	1,986
decided	1,332	1,753	1,293	1,620	1,135	1,649	1,489	1,083	1,264	1,486	1,295

## Annex A – Content of ad-hoc Statistical Releases, 2020

Note: The Table below covers ad-hoc statistical releases. From November 2020 onwards, the content is fixed, so is the same as this publication.

Date	March 2020	April 2020	July 2020	September 2020	October 2020
Content	<p>Appeals receipts and decisions in the last 12 and 24 months (1st March 2018 – 29th February 2020)</p> <p>Number of section 78 Planning Appeals received / decided / within target that used the written representation method in the last 12 months (1st March 2019 – 29th February 2020)</p> <p>Number of dwellings decided and number of dwellings allowed by appeal decisions between 1st January 2017 and 31st December 2019.</p> <p>Number of Planning Inspectors employed by the Planning Inspectorate at the end of each quarter between 31st March 2017 and 31st December 2019.</p>	<p>Appeals receipts and decisions between 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020</p> <p>Live appeals in the system as at 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020</p> <p>Number of appeals involving housing within the system as at 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020</p> <p>Virtual site visits</p>	<p>Appeals decisions between 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020</p> <p>Number of open cases</p> <p>Number of virtual events</p> <p>Number of appeals involving housing within the system as at 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020</p>	<p>Appeals decisions between 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020</p> <p>Number of open cases</p> <p>Number of virtual events</p>	<p>Appeals decisions from October 2019 to September 2020</p> <p>Number of open cases</p> <p>Number of virtual events</p>
Scope	<p>England only</p> <p>Planning cases, Enforcement cases and Rights of Way orders</p>	<p>England only</p> <p>Planning cases, Enforcement cases and Rights of Way orders</p>	<p>England only</p> <p>Planning cases, Enforcement cases and Rights of Way orders</p>	<p>England only</p> <p>Planning cases, Enforcement cases and Rights of Way orders</p>	<p>England only</p> <p>Planning cases, Enforcement cases, Specialist cases: Common Land, Rights of Way orders, Tree Preservation Orders, High Hedges appeals and Hedgerow appeals</p>

## Annex B – Mean and median time to decision, with standard deviation, for planning, enforcement and specialist casework

### Planning

Measure	Procedure	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Valid to decision (mean weeks)	Written Representations	26.5	23.2	22.6	22.5	23.3	25.2	26.6	24.6	23.7	22.5	21.0	22.9	23.7
	Hearings	42.9	50.0	46.7	42.2	51.3	39.7	35.0	45.9	46.2	41.2	48.0	56.1	45.0
	Inquiries	69.4	62.0	22.7	60.0	41.1	44.6	54.9	35.3	40.4	50.6	35.8	54.9	46.1
	All Cases	27.1	23.5	22.9	23.0	23.7	25.6	27.0	25.4	24.6	23.2	21.9	24.7	24.4
Valid to decision (median weeks)	Written Representations	23.3	21.3	22.0	21.7	22.3	23.9	25.4	22.0	20.4	19.4	18.0	20.1	21.4
	Hearings	42.0	42.4	34.4	45.1	43.1	34.0	36.1	43.0	46.6	46.4	44.8	56.9	41.9
	Inquiries	69.4	62.0	23.4	49.2	41.1	34.8	53.9	39.4	40.7	42.9	33.6	52.4	40.3
	All Cases	23.7	21.3	22.1	21.9	22.6	24.1	25.6	22.7	20.8	19.8	18.3	20.9	21.9
Standard Deviation (weeks)	Written Representations	13.7	9.2	8.8	10.4	8.8	10.7	10.9	11.4	10.8	10.5	10.9	11.1	10.8
	Hearings	14.7	24.9	27.9	9.7	20.5	18.5	13.3r	17.4	23.0	16.7	24.6	23.6	20.6
	Inquiries	22.4	1.6	1.4	41.8	1.1	20.8	13.1	10.2	18.4	29.0	12.1	30.7	24.2
	All Cases	14.4	10.0	9.6	11.4	9.8	11.3	11.3	12.3	12.3	11.6	12.3	14.6	11.9

### Enforcement

Measure	Procedure	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Valid to decision (mean weeks)	Written Representations	33.0	35.0	37.2	36.8	37.1	41.4	36.7	38.4	36.5	35.4	32.3	34.4	36.6
	Hearings	74.8	94.8	96.5	34.4	34.3	84.4	54.4	64.3	82.7	66.3	78.5	77.9	75.2
	Inquiries	88.1r	85.6	-	-	84.6	43.9	62.5	102.9	94.7	108.7	81.8	73.8	83.1
	All Cases	34.5	37.5	38.0	36.8	37.5	42.8	37.7	42.1	43.7	42.7	41.6	47.6	39.8
Valid to decision (median weeks)	Written Representations	28.5	28.9	32.6	33.3	33.6	36.9	33.9	35.3	31.1	28.1	27.6	29.6	32.3
	Hearings	76.5	93.4	100.1	34.4	34.3	89.0	56.0	68.5	78.8	68.8	84.4	71.3	77.0
	Inquiries	88.1r	87.0	-	-	84.6	42.6	56.1	99.0	96.9	125.3	86.7	62.4	86.7
	All Cases	29.1	29.0	33.0	33.3	33.6	38.4	34.6	36.9	37.6	34.9	30.5	35.2	33.7
Standard Deviation (weeks)	Written Representations	15.6	18.2	21.8	17.3	14.9	19.3	16.3	18.9	23.1	17.8	16.9	20.9	18.4
	Hearings	16.4	16.6	5.2	0.0	0.0	12.8	12.3	22.6	23.2	22.2	15.6	28.0	23.1
	Inquiries	0.0r	7.6	-	-	0.0	10.1	10.1	19.2	21.0	23.2	26.8	20.3	26.0
	All Cases	17.6r	21.3	22.6	17.3	15.5	20.5	16.8	23.0	28.9	26.7	26.2	29.4	22.0

## Specialist

Measure	Procedure	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Valid to decision (mean weeks)	Written Representations	29.4	37.4	40.9	34.6	45.2	38.9	37.5	43.6	42.7	52.7	23.0	33.3	39.1
	Hearings	0.0	-	-	62.1	-	-	-	-	89.8	65.0	80.0	69.1	78.2
	Inquiries	65.0	62.0	71.6	47.9	63.7	37.3	66.7	59.9	58.4	77.6	18.0	87.3	63.1
	All Cases	32.3	40.6	42.3	36.9r	47.0	38.8	39.4	44.3	46.1	53.7	25.5	37.8	40.9
Valid to decision (median weeks)	Written Representations	18.6	34.5	39.8	35.9	48.1	33.7	39.1	42.4	43.6	53.0	13.9	21.9	35.9
	Hearings	-	-	-	62.1	-	-	-	-	102.1	65.0	80.0	69.1	67.1
	Inquiries	65.0	63.5	71.6	43.1	65.0	37.3	60.4	59.9	64.0	81.9	18.0	88.4	65.0
	All Cases	19.9	37.1	40.9	36.6r	48.7	35.5	41.1	44.0	52.9	53.3	14.7	23.9	37.2
Standard Deviation (weeks)	Written Representations	16.3	22.6	16.4	17.0	24.5	26.6	16.7	25.6	33.3	24.7	23.4	28.4	25.2
	Hearings	-	-	-	0.0	-	-	-	-	18.1	0.0	16.3	0.0	17.5
	Inquiries	0.0	6.5	0.6	13.4	12.7	0.0	17.3	13.1	19.5	19.9	0.0	1.5	21.4
	All Cases	18.5	23.1	17.2	17.5	24.3	26.4	18.3	25.4	33.7	24.8	25.8	30.7	25.8

r denotes revision – a change of more than 0.5 weeks since last month.

## Annex C – Detailed Information on timeliness (April)

The information below is published today on the number and length of decisions made in April 2021<sup>21</sup>:

Casework Type	Procedure Type	Mean (weeks)	Median (weeks)	Decisions
s78 planning appeals	Written Representations	26.2	23.0	526
	Hearings	55.8	56.9	32
	Inquiries	53.5	51.9	17
Householder appeals	Written Representations	17.6	15.4	305
Enforcement appeals	Written Representations	34.4	29.6	68
	Hearings	77.9	71.3	16
	Inquiries	73.8	62.4	16

The smaller the number of decisions, the less helpful the mean and median are as measures for summarising performance. Particular care should be taken when there are fewer than twenty decisions. These are shaded grey in the table but have been provided for completeness and transparency.

The information published below shows the time taken for different stages of the appeals process:

	s78 planning appeals			Householder appeals
	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	
<b>Weeks between valid date &amp; start date</b>				
Mean (average)	8.1	17.6	3.1	7.3
Median (average)	6.5	13.9	3.1	7.7
Cases that started in Apr 21	596	20	16	297
<b>Weeks between start date &amp; event date</b>				
Mean (average)	13.4	17.4	28.1	8.9
Median (average)	9.6	11.6	20.6	6.6
Cases where an event occurred during Apr 21	719	47	31	290
<b>Weeks between event date &amp; decision date</b>				
Mean (average)	5.0	10.7	8.0	3.6
Median (average)	3.7	6.4	8.0	2.9
Cases that have been decided in Apr 21	517	32	17	301

- Valid date – the date a case is deemed to have been validly received
- Start date – date when a case has started its documentation phase (requesting statements and additional information) and an Inspector resource has usually been identified to carry out the case
- Event date – the date of either a site visit, hearing or inquiry

<sup>21</sup> Also published on gov.uk here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeals-average-timescales-for-arranging-inquiries-and-hearings>



- Decision date – the date the decision was issued by The Planning Inspectorate

## Annex D – Data table from s78 planning appeals received & decided by quarter

Year or Quarter		received	decided
2015/16	Apr - Jun	2,944	1,963
	Jul - Sep	2,972	2,539
	Oct - Dec	2,927	2,447
	Jan - Mar	2,955	3,332
2016/17	Apr - Jun	2,929	2,958
	Jul - Sep	2,895	3,056
	Oct - Dec	2,997	2,683
	Jan - Mar	2,972	2,796
2017/18	Apr - Jun	3,108	2,600
	Jul - Sep	3,132	2,680
	Oct - Dec	3,685	2,728
	Jan - Mar	3,437	2,733
2018/19	Apr - Jun	3,104	2,428
	Jul - Sep	3,193	2,431
	Oct - Dec	3,075	2,741
	Jan - Mar	2,867	2,666
2019/20	Apr - Jun	3,203	3,540
	Jul - Sep	2,849	3,705
	Oct - Dec	2,772	3,350
	Jan - Mar	2,900	2,759
2020/21	Apr – Jun	2,631	1,514
	Jul – Sep	2,647	2,253
	Oct – Dec	2,783	2,880
	Jan - Mar	2,825	2,474

## Annex E – Casework types included in this release

Planning covers s78 planning appeals, Householder appeals, Commercial appeals, s20 Listed Building appeals, Advertisement appeals, s106 Planning Obligation appeals and Called In Planning Applications.

Enforcement covers s174 Enforcement appeals, s39 Enforcement Listed Building appeals and Lawful Development Certificate appeals.

Specialist casework includes Common Land, Rights of Way orders, Purchase orders, Tree Preservation Orders, High Hedges appeals and Hedgerow appeals.

Note that the data on Open Cases excludes Tree Preservation Orders and High Hedges and Hedgerow appeals.

## Background notes

### Data sources

Horizon / Picaso – The main casework management systems used for processing appeals casework (note that Picaso is no longer a live system).

SAP HR – The Human Resources system database used to store all information regarding members of staff.

Measure	Definition
Mean	The total time taken divided by the number of cases. Also referred to as the 'average'. A measure of how long each case would take, if the total time taken was spread evenly across all cases.
Median	This is the time taken by the 'middle' case if all cases were sorted from quickest to longest
Standard deviation	This is a measure of variability or spread. It is calculated by examining how much each value differs from the mean. A higher standard deviation means the individual decision times vary more widely around the mean.

### Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

These statistics have been published in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics, which cover trustworthiness, quality and value. They have been pre-announced, and publication is overseen by the Head of Profession.

### Technical Notes

A Background Quality Report is published alongside this Statistical Release. It provides more detail on the quality of statistics in this publication.

Data quality	Data on cases is taken from a live casework system, and details of cases can change for a number of reasons even after a decision has been made. We are seeking to get a better understanding of the nature and volume of these changes and will provide further information as it is available. We carry out regular checks on the quality of our data and may undertake ad hoc data cleansing exercises. Therefore, all the data for the last 12 rolling months is published in provisional form.
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	We have indicated in this publication any data where a number of cases has changed by more than five cases in a month; or where a measure (mean, median or standard deviation) has changed by more than 0.5 weeks.
Virtual Events	Data is currently being sourced from an operational MS Excel workbook. It is therefore being constantly updated and refined and may result in data may changing between monthly publications. There are concerns about the quality and accuracy of the data collection methods. Definitions of what constitutes an event are being refined, as this differs according to the type of casework. Whilst this work is in progress these numbers should be treated as provisional. Data for Local Plans is now being sourced from information recorded by Inspectors on their timesheets.
Measuring weeks	Data are measured in days and then converted to weeks. Note that not all decimal values are possible where converting days to weeks. 1 day is 1/7 of a week, or 0.14 weeks (to two decimal places). 2 days = 0.29; 3 days = 0.43; 4 days = 0.57; 5 days = 0.71; 6 days = 0.86.  When these are used to calculate averages, or displayed to one decimal place, the result will not equate to a full day which can be misleading: it may appear that we are measuring part days (e.g. 19.8 weeks) but we only measure in whole days.

## Glossary

Term	Explanation
Appeals	The right to appeal a planning decision made by a local authority is a key feature of the planning system, as is appealing when an authority is taking too long.
Appeals decided	Number of appeals by the date the appeal was decided by The Planning Inspectorate.
Appeals received	Number of appeals by the date the appeal was received by The Planning Inspectorate.
Applications	Planning Inspectorate manage the application process for proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within England and Wales in line with the 2008 Planning Act.
Closed	The total number of appeals decided, withdrawn or turned away.
Decision	The outcome of the case e.g. appeal allowed or rejected. The date of the decision is taken as the date a decision letter is sent to the appellant.
Event	A site visit, hearing or inquiry (may be virtual)
Event Type	The different options of how an Inspector visits a site for a written representations appeal.
Examinations	The process of examining local plans is dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate. Every Local Planning Authority is required to have a local plan. This includes a vision for the future and plan to address housing needs in the area. When a Local Planning Authority has finished preparing and consulting on a local plan it must be submitted to the Secretary of

	State who appoints an Inspector to carry out an independent examination.
FTE	Full Time Equivalent – a count of employees where those working part time are counted in proportion with their contracted hours.
Headcount	Total number of staff employed regardless of how many hours they work (i.e. the number of different individuals).
Hearings	<p>A hearing involves the submission of written evidence by the main parties and a hearing once all the written submissions have been received.</p> <p>This takes the form of a round-the-table discussion (in person or virtually) that will be led by the planning inspector. It allows for all parties to respond to any questions that the inspector might have, and to let everyone make their case known.</p> <p>Source: Planning Portal</p>
Inquiries	<p>An inquiry is usually used for complex cases where legal issues may need to be considered. The main parties will usually have legal representatives to present their case and to cross-examine any witnesses. Prior to the inquiry date, the Planning Inspectorate will expect to have received various documents from all parties that will be taking part in the appeal. These may include statements of case and proofs of evidence from expert witnesses. Third parties may also take part. The inquiry will be led by the inspector and will follow a formal procedure.</p> <p>At some point during or on conclusion of the inquiry the inspector and the main parties will undertake a site visit.</p> <p>Source: Planning Portal</p>
Live appeals	Number of live appeals in that have an appeal valid date but no end date (either decision date or a closed date, e.g. for appeals that have been withdrawn).
Open Cases	Number of cases that have been received but on which a decision has not yet been made/ issued. Will differ from Live Appeals as it includes those received but not yet verified.
Procedure Type	The method by which The Planning Inspectorate processes and decides appeals.
Written Representations	Most planning appeals are decided by the written representations' procedure. With this procedure the Inspector considers written evidence from the appellant, the LPA and anyone else who has an interest in the appeal. The site is also likely to be visited.

## Contact Us

The Planning Inspectorate welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

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**Please note** we are currently reviewing our statistics with a view to making them as clear and helpful as possible for users. We would be delighted if you could contact us via the address below with any views on this approach; particularly on what content would be most useful and why.

email [statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

If you require information which is not available within this or other available publications, you may wish to submit a Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the Planning Inspectorate. For more information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act>