



The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Official Statistics 23 June 2022

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 have been made is also included; and on the number of Inspectors available to make those decisions.

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:

- Appeals decisions and events held from June 2021 to May 2022
- The time taken to reach decisions
- Number of open cases
- Number of Inspectors

The Planning Inspectorate

The Planning Inspectorate makes decisions and provides recommendations and advice on a range of land use planning-related issues across England. 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 in England. The Planning Inspectorate is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, previously known as the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Summary

Time to decide cases

The median time to decide a case in May 2022 was 28 weeks. The median time to decide was around 22 weeks during June 2021, and has increased to 24 weeks and over for the last 9 months.

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

Procedure type	Last 12 months	May 2022
Written Representations	24 weeks	27 weeks
Hearings	55 weeks	94 weeks
Inquiries	58 weeks	44 weeks
All Cases	25 weeks	28 weeks

The median time for planning cases was at or above 20 weeks for each of the last 12 months; and 24 weeks or more for the last nine months. Across the whole year, the median time to decision is 24 weeks.

Enforcement decisions made in the last 12 months had a median decision time of 38 weeks.

For each of the last 12 months Specialist cases have been decided more quickly than Enforcement cases.

The median time for planning appeals decided by inquiry under the Rosewell Process over the 12 months to May 2022 is 30 weeks. This is quicker than any other casework decided by inquiry.

Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate has made 17,474 appeal decisions¹ in the last 12 months, an average of 1,456 per month. The number of decisions in May 2022 was slightly lower than average, 1,410 decisions were issued.

There were 1,287 written representations decisions in May 2022; and 16,320 in the last 12 months. Pre-pandemic levels were approximately between 1,600 and 2,000 decisions per month.

There were 665 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, and during May 2022, 87 decisions were issued. Pre-pandemic levels for hearing decisions were between 50 and 100 decisions per month.

There were 489 decisions made on inquiries during the last 12 months, with 36 in May 2022. Decisions for inquiries since June 2021 have ranged between 18 and 60. Pre-pandemic levels for inquiry decisions were between 15 and 90 decisions per month.

Planning Inspectors

There were 365 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in April 2022 with a full-time equivalent of 326.

¹ 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 D the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

Decisions, Events & Open Cases

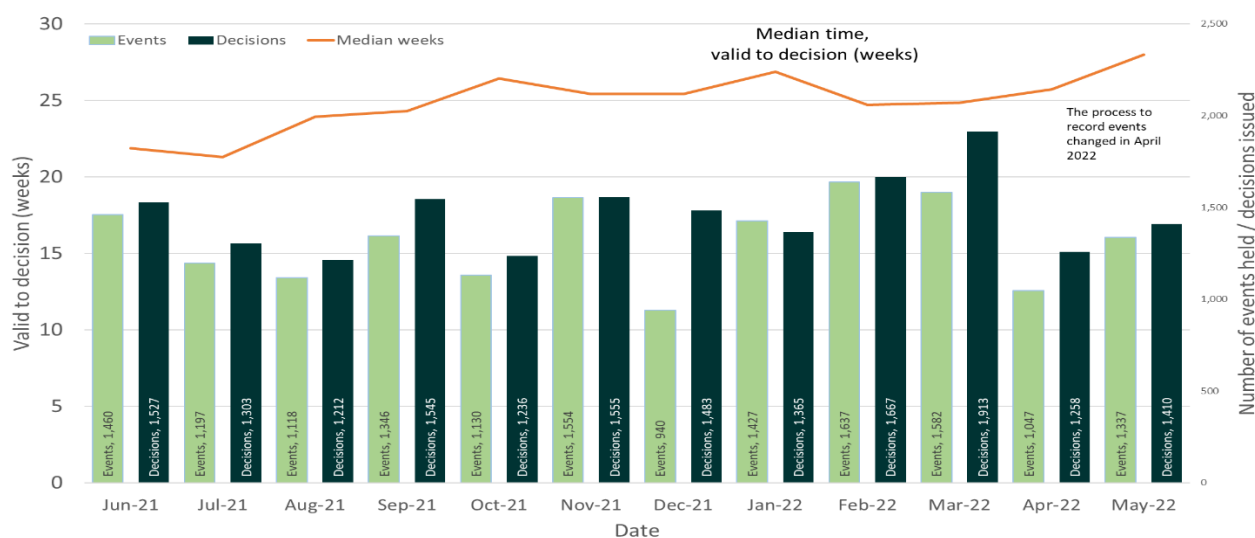
Planning Inspectorate has a new process and software in place for scheduling casework. Data on events is being obtained from a different source from April 22 onwards and as a result statistics from that date onwards can not be meaningfully compared with statistics before that date. Further, it is possible that current events data is incomplete as staff transition to this new admin system. We will review this each month going forward and make any revisions required in future editions of this publication.

The number of decisions issued in May 2022 was 1,410; an increase of 152 decisions compared to April 2022. The lower numbers of decisions issued in April and May compared with the first three months of 2022 may be due to seasonal variation influenced by the Easter and May bank holidays and inspector leave patterns.

The number of events recorded for May 2022 was 1,337

The median² time to decide a case during May 2022 was 28 weeks, 2.3 weeks higher than April 2022. The median time to decide was around 22 weeks at the start of the reporting period, and has been 24 – 27 weeks over the past 9 months.

Figure 1: Number of events held³, decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; June 2021 to May 2022.



Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System

Note: The process and admin system used for events data has changed from April 2022

Table 1: Number of events held, decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; June 2021 to May 2022

Note: This table includes revisions to previously published data. Please see Annex D for further information

Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Events Held	1,460	1,197	1,118	1,346	1,130	1,554	940	1,427	1,637	1,582	1,047	1,337	15,775
Decisions	1,527	1,303	1,212	1,545	1,236	1,555	1,483	1,365	1,667	1,913	1,258	1,410	17,474
Median	21.9	21.3	23.9	24.3	26.4	25.4	25.4	26.9	24.7	24.9	25.7	28.0	24.6

² See the section on Decision timeliness for more, including definitions of the average measures used in this release.

³ A site visit, hearing, or inquiry. From January 2022 onwards hearings and inquiries have been held in person.

Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System.

Over recent months The Planning Inspectorate as transitioned to a new system for scheduling casework and changed the way that specialist casework records are kept, bringing them in line with other casetype records. This has resulted in approximately 200 extra cases being included in our open case counts from February 2022.

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; June 2021 to May 2022



Source: Horizon and Picaso

Note 1: there is a known anomaly that means that the number of open cases does not exactly follow the volumes of cases closed or received (for example the number of open cases can increase between months even though the number closed exceeded the number received). The main reasons for this have been identified and are detailed in the Background Quality Report. The inspectorate are Investigating how to introduce new processes to improve the quality of this data which once complete may result in revisions to the number of open cases.

Note 2: Additional specialist casetypes are included in open case counts from February 2022

Table 2: Number of cases received, closed and open; June 2021 to May 2022

Note 1: This table includes revisions to previously published data. Please see Annex D for further information

Note 2: Additional specialist casetypes are included in open case counts from February 2022

Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Received	1,804	1,770	1,784	1,824	1,763	1,943	1,754	1,707	1,716	1,822	1,633	1,815	21,335
Closed	1,729	1,492	1,358	1,731	1,423	1,783	1,690	1,549	1,887	2,161	1,433	1,651	19,887
Open All Cases	11,759	11,971	12,506	12,553	12,853	12,991	13,125	13,321	13,374	13,057	13,264	13,586	

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Number of Decisions

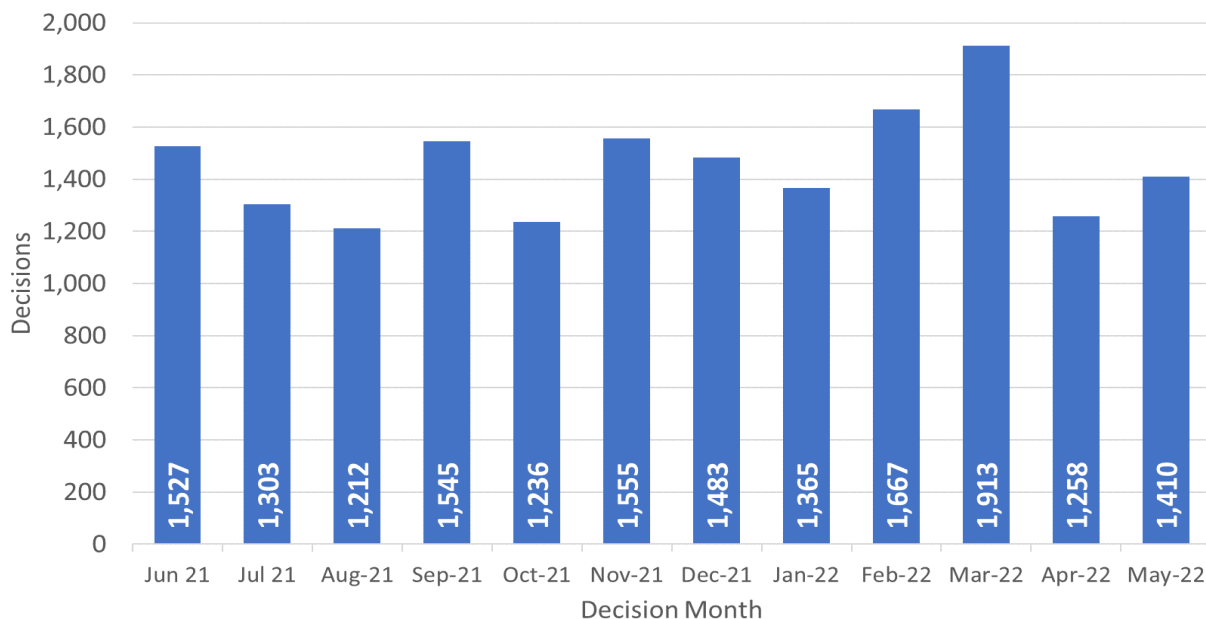
The Planning Inspectorate has made 17,474 appeal decisions⁴ in the last 12 months. There were 1,410 cases decided in May 2022 which is less than the 12 month average of 1,456 per month. Table 3 below shows the monthly breakdown with fewer decisions for the months of July, August, October and April.

Table 3: Appeal Decisions; June 2021 to May 2022

Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Decisions	1,527	1,303	1,212	1,545	1,236	1,555	1,483	1,365	1,667	1,913	1,258	1,410	17,474

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Figure 3 – Appeal Decisions; June 2021 to May 2022



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 Plans⁵, Compulsory Purchase Order applications and many other specialist licencing/application types.

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 (16,320) were made on written representations. This is ninety three percent of all appeal decisions made. Table 4 shows that the number of written representation decisions has varied from around 1,100 to over 1,800 per month over the past 12 months. (Pre-pandemic levels being between approximately 1,600 and 2,000 decisions per month). There were 1,287 decisions in May 2022.

There were 665 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, the monthly average being 55. During May 2022 87 decisions were issued. Pre-pandemic levels for hearing decisions were between 50 and 100 decisions per month. In May 2022 36 decisions were

⁴ 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 D the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

⁵ 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)

made for inquiries. Decisions for inquiries since June 2021 have ranged between 18 and 60. Pre-pandemic levels for inquiry decisions were between 15 and 90 decisions per month.

Table 4: Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; June 2021 to May 2022

Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Written Representations	1,391	1,201	1,105	1,475	1,186	1,457	1,398	1,250	1,595	1,816	1,159	1,287	16,320
Hearings	80	65	51	40	32	47	53	55	37	51	67	87	665
Inquiries	56	37	56	30	18	51	32	60	35	46	32	36	489
Total	1,527	1,303	1,212	1,545	1,236	1,555	1,483	1,365	1,667	1,913	1,258	1,410	17,474
Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Planning	1,268	1,077	970	1,365	1,033	1,330	1,262	1,108	1,412	1,612	988	1,149	14,574
Enforcement	198	179	187	148	153	193	160	208	221	253	174	212	2,286
Specialist	61	47	55	32	50	32	61	49	34	48	96	49	614
Total	1,527	1,303	1,212	1,545	1,236	1,555	1,483	1,365	1,667	1,913	1,258	1,410	17,474

Source: Horizon and Picaso.

What are Planning cases? The Planning category includes s78 planning appeals, householder appeals, commercial appeals, listed building consent appeals, advertisement appeals, s106 planning obligation appeals and Called In Planning Applications.

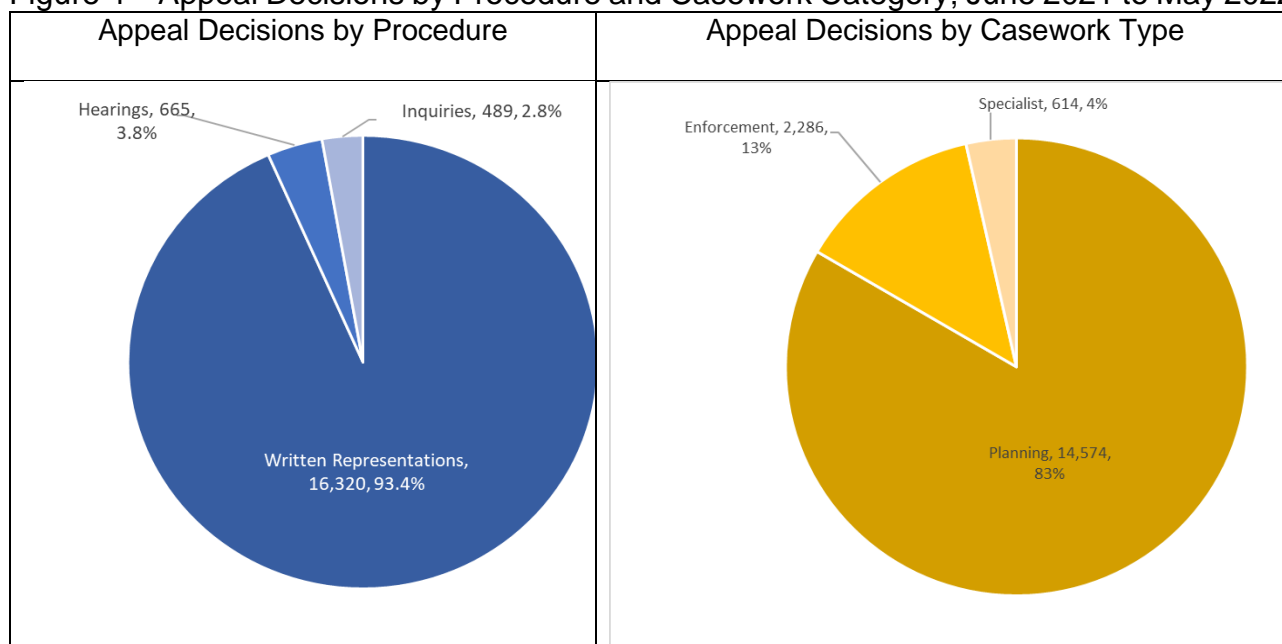
What are Enforcement cases? Enforcement covers enforcement appeals (i.e., appeals against the issue of an enforcement notice by a local planning authority), enforcement listed building notice appeals and lawful development certificate appeals.

What are Specialist cases? This category covers a wide range of different types of casework including Common Land, Environment, Purchase Notice, Rights of Way orders (including Schedule 14 cases), Tree Preservation Orders, Hedgerows and High Hedges cases.

The large majority of cases were planning (14,574). This is about eighty-three per cent of all appeal decisions made. There were 2,286 enforcement decisions and 614 specialist decisions. These totals are also shown in Table 4 above and Figure 4 below.

Trends for planning decisions show similar patterns to written representations. The average number of enforcement decisions over the past 12 months was 191. March 22 had the most enforcement decisions of the last 12 months. Specialist casework figures continue to vary each month, from a low of 32 in September and November 2021 to a high of 96 in April 2022. The high number of cases decided in April was partly attributable to a large group of linked cases that were responded to at the same time.

Figure 4 – Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; June 2021 to May 2022



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 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 median time to make a decision, across all cases in the last 12 months, was 25 weeks. Figure 5 shows the median has been above 21 weeks for the last 12 months; and has generally been higher since August 21.

How is timeliness measured?

The time to make a decision is measured from the time the Inspectorate have enough information for the case to proceed (it is deemed 'valid') to the time a decision letter is issued. A large majority of cases are 'validated' (the difference between the date the appeal is received, and the validation process being completed) in a week or less.

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 long decisions submitted, or deemed 'valid' in that month, will take.

Table 5 also shows the mean time for the last 12 months is 30 weeks. Each month the median is less than the mean, due to the relatively small number of very long cases. Also included in the table is the *standard deviation* of decision timeliness. The standard deviation – a measure of variation – is comparable to performance seen over the last 12 months.

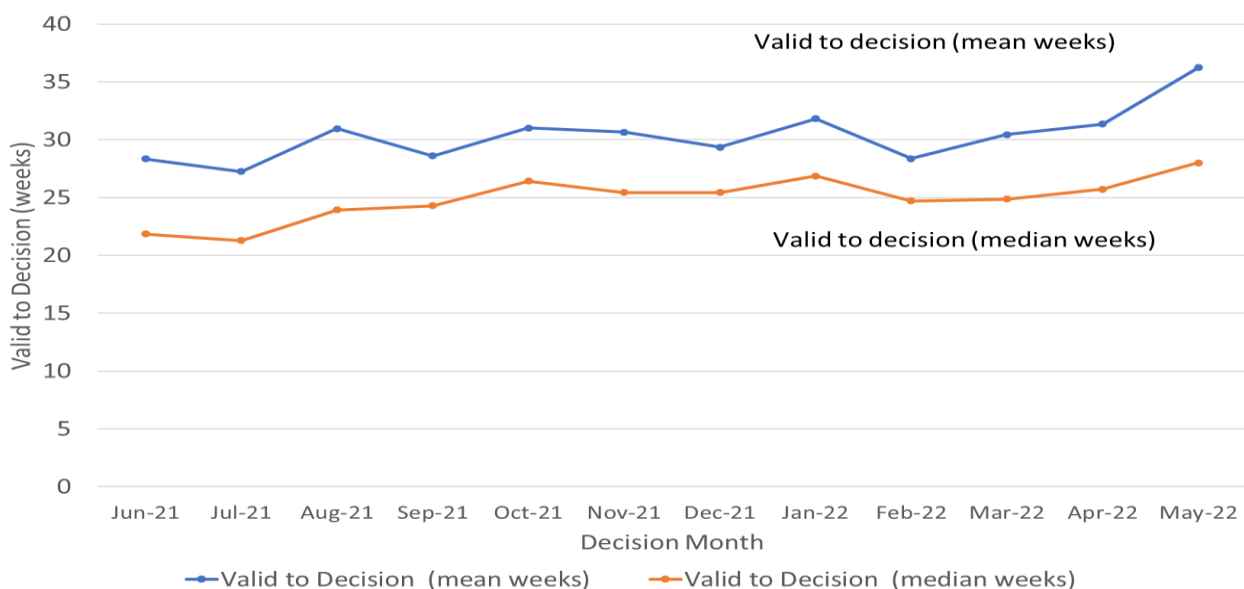
What are mean, median, and standard deviation?	
Measure	Definition
Mean	The total time taken divided by the number of cases. Also referred to as the 'average'. A measure of how long each case would take, if the total time taken was spread evenly across all cases.
Median	This is the time taken by the '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. A lower standard deviation would demonstrate greater consistency in the Planning Inspectorate's decision timeliness.

Table 5: Median, mean and Standard Deviation of Time to Decision; June 2021 to May 2022

Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	21.9	21.3	23.9	24.3	26.4	25.4	25.4	26.9	24.7	24.9	25.7	28.0	24.6
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	28.3	27.3	31.0	28.6	31.0	30.6	29.4	31.8	28.4	30.4	31.3	36.2	30.0
Standard Deviation (weeks)	19.7	18.5	23.3	16.7	19.0	21.3	17.7	22.0	17.7	23.9	24.8	31.2	21.4

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Figure 5: Median and mean Time to Decision; June 2021 to May 2022



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 – both types take more than twice as long on average across the last 12 months. Because 19 of every 20 cases are by written representation, the timeliness measures for written representations are 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 noted

in the table caption below should be treated with caution as there are fewer than 20 cases decided.

Median times are less affected by large values than mean times, so are the focus of this commentary. The median time for written representations over the 12 months to May 2022 is 24 weeks; the last eight months have longer median time to decision than the previous four months. The median time for inquiries over the 12 months to May 2022 is 58 weeks. The median time for decisions for hearings was higher than usual in May 2022 due to decisions having being issued on a large number of linked appeals of a complex nature.

Table 6: Mean and Median Time to Decision, with Standard Deviation, by Procedure; June 2021 to May 2022

Note 1: where the number of decisions issued is fewer than 20, the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful. This applies to the number of inquiries in October 2021.

Key: WR= Written Representations; HRG= Hearings; INQ= Inquiries; All= All Cases

Measure	Procedure	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	WR	20.7	20.4	23.0	23.6	25.9	24.4	24.9	25.4	24.1	24.1	24.4	27.0	23.7
	HRG	61.3	43.6	43.9	50.4	53.6	47.9	53.1	64.1	45.7	52.9	108.3	94.0	55.0
	INQ	64.6	79.0	95.0	35.6	50.4	84.9	40.6	90.9	57.3	42.1	40.4	44.2	58.3
	All	21.9	21.3	23.9	24.3	26.4	25.4	25.4	26.9	24.7	24.9	25.7	28.0	24.6
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	WR	25.0	24.5	27.2	27.3	29.6	27.9	27.7	28.1	27.0	28.8	27.3	30.4	27.3
	HRG	57.0	50.0	49.8	57.1	57.2	60.8	61.2	75.7	57.5	60.6	89.1	113.6	66.6
	INQ	70.9	77.5	87.7	56.5	77.6	82.3	47.3	69.4	60.7	60.7	57.2	55.8	67.8
	All	28.3	27.3	31.0	28.6	31.0	30.6	29.4	31.8	28.4	30.4	31.3	36.2	30.0
Standard Deviation (weeks)	WR	13.9	13.3	16.0	14.0	16.4	15.5	15.0	15.3	15.1	21.9	17.2	18.3	16.2
	HRG	21.7	19.8	27.5	27.5	22.9	38.6	32.0	43.8	33.1	27.3	38.3	59.8	40.7
	INQ	42.8	43.8	47.1	40.8	50.9	43.8	30.0	30.5	35.4	45.8	45.5	37.2	41.7
	All	19.7	18.5	23.3	16.7	19.0	21.3	17.7	22.0	17.7	23.9	24.8	31.2	21.4
Decisions	WR	1,391	1,201	1,105	1,475	1,186	1,457	1,398	1,250	1,595	1,816	1,159	1,287	16,320
	HRG	80	65	51	40	32	47	53	55	37	51	67	87	665
	INQ	56	37	56	30	18	51	32	60	35	46	32	36	489
	All	1,527	1,303	1,212	1,545	1,236	1,555	1,483	1,365	1,667	1,913	1,258	1,410	17,474

Source: Horizon and Picaso.

The standard deviation information indicates that for all three procedures, there is considerable variation, meaning times are widely spread about the mean. For written representations, the amount of variation has been quite stable over recent months, whereas hearings and enquiries have experienced considerable month to month changes in the spread of decision times.

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 type of casework. Table 7 below shows the time taken to decide, in planning cases, in enforcement cases, and in specialist⁶ 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 enforcement cases; and less variable than the

⁶ See the box in the section on Number of Decisions for what these categories of casework include.

times for specialist cases. Table 7 and Figure 6 show the median time for planning cases was above 20 weeks for the last 12 months; and ranged between 23 and 27 weeks for the last ten months. Across the 12 month period, the median time to decision is 24 weeks for these cases.

Table 7: Decisions, Mean, Median and Standard Deviation of Time to Decision – Planning, Enforcement, Specialist Cases; June 2021 to May 2022

Note: This table includes revisions to previously published data. Please see Annex D for further information

Casework Category	Measure	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Planning Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	20.7	20.4	23.0	23.6	25.3	24.6	24.6	25.2	24.2	23.6	25.0	27.0	23.6
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	25.2	24.4	26.2	26.9	28.3	27.2	26.8	28.1	26.3	25.8	26.7	30.3	26.6
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	15.2	13.7	14.7	13.5	13.6	14.1	13.7	16.2	13.9	15.1	15.3	21.6	15.1
Enforcement Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	38.9	32.3	41.6	33.2	34.0	39.9	39.1	37.5	31.3	44.3	48.0	57.9	38.4
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	45.9	42.7	54.5	40.7	43.6	53.5	45.0	49.5	40.0	57.3	59.7	67.2	49.8
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	29.8	29.4	38.3	26.3	30.2	37.6	26.4	32.4	26.7	39.9	40.8	50.2	35.8
Specialist Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	28.0	22.4	17.7	27.7	32.1	19.7	27.1	29.4	25.4	27.2	12.7	27.3	23.4
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	36.6	33.6	34.4	46.8	48.9	36.4	40.8	41.6	40.5	46.7	27.4	40.4	37.1
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	27.7	27.1	29.6	35.7	36.6	40.7	32.5	37.0	37.8	45.5	30.0	34.8	34.0

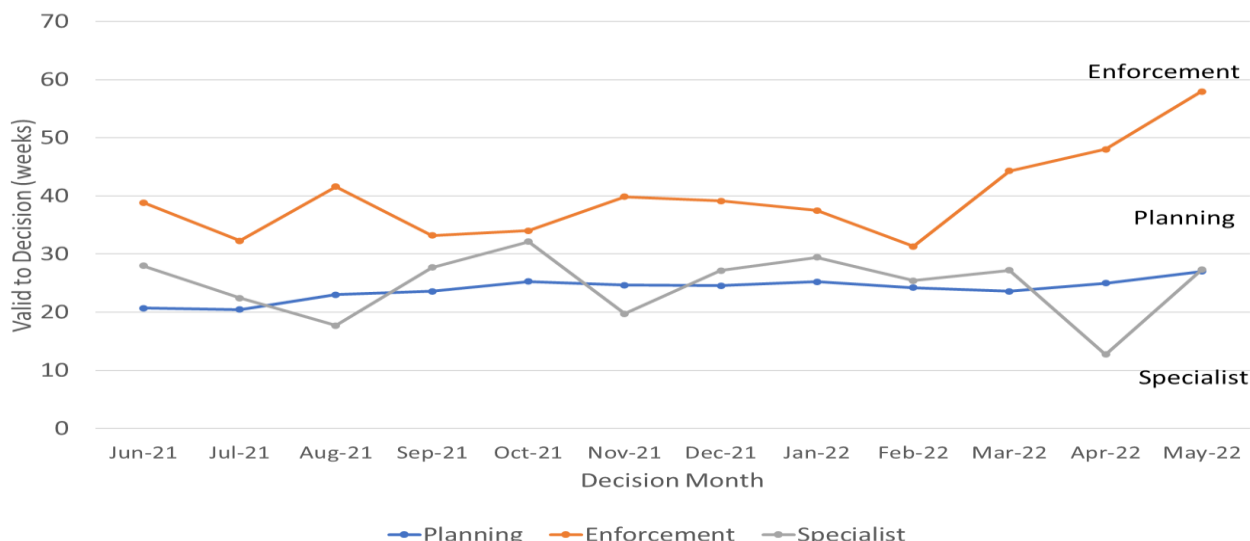
Source: Horizon and Picaso.

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

Enforcement decisions made in the last 12 months had a median decision time of 38 weeks.

There are considerably fewer specialist cases which means results are more liable to be distorted by extreme values. Looking at the annual measures, the median time to decision over the past 12 months is similar for specialist and planning cases while the median time to decision for enforcement cases is higher.

Figure 6 – Median Time to Decision by Casework Category: June 2021 to May 2022



Source: Horizon and Picaso

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 B⁷ 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 under Rosewell process over the 12 months to May 2022 is 30 weeks and the median time to decision for May 2022 was 31 weeks.

Table 8: Decisions, Mean and Median Time to Decision, Planning Inquiry Cases under Rosewell Process; June 2021 to May 2022

Note 1: where there are fewer than 20 decisions, the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful.

Measure	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Decisions	30	11	13	19	8	19	14	21	23	22	15	25	220
Median (weeks)	33.9	29.1	25.1	26.9	43.2	28.6	27.4	31.9	42.1	30.0	33.6	30.6	30.4
Mean (weeks)	40.7	32.0	39.6	30.5	40.0	36.8	29.2	37.8	47.0	35.5	36.0	40.0	37.4
St. Dev. (weeks)	22.1	12.0	44.5	10.7	13.5	18.7	8.5	19.6	19.7	14.2	13.3	20.5	20.0

Most inquiry decisions now being issued are under the revised 'Rosewell'⁸ process but some inquiries, for example those that are linked together with associated enforcement cases, do not follow the Rosewell process.

Table 9: Decisions, Planning Inquiry Cases under non-Rosewell Process; June 2021 to May 2022

Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Decisions	7	2	3	1	0	0	3	2	0	3	3	1	25

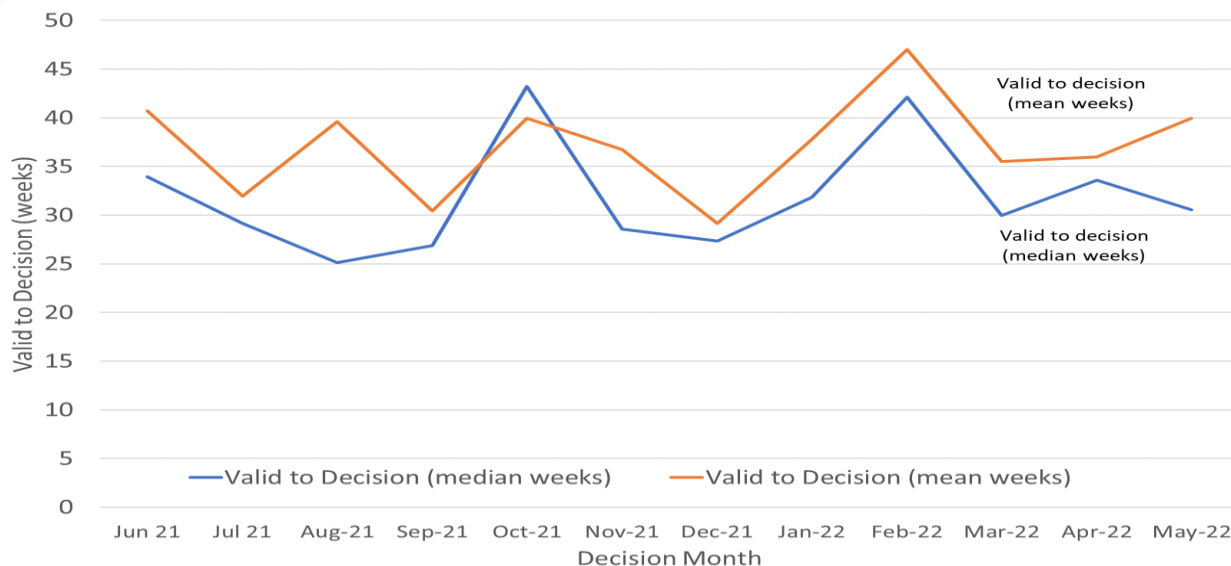
Source: Horizon

⁷ Data also published on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeals-average-timescales-for-arranging-inquiries-and-hearings>

⁸ 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 below shows the mean and median time to decision for planning inquiry cases under the Rosewell process.

Figure 7: Mean and Median Time to Decision, Rosewell Inquiry Process; June 2021 to May 2022



Source: Horizon

Open Cases

At the end of May 2022, the Planning Inspectorate had thirteen and a half thousand cases open⁹ (13,586). This is higher than the previous month; the number of open cases has been rising through the year. More information on the number of open cases, and how it has changed over the past 12 months, is in Table 2 and Figure 2 above.

The open cases comprised of 11,754 cases being handled through written representations; 982 through hearings; and 722 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 yet to start, than at any other stage in the process. Event refers to either a site visit, hearing, or inquiry.

⁹ 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 many types of specialist casework. The types of specialist casework included in open case counts has increased over time. See Background Quality report for more information.

Table 10: Open cases by procedure and stage, as of end of May 2022

Stage	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	Total
Cases received but yet to be deemed valid	1,419	70	4	1,494
Cases deemed valid but yet to 'start'	2,643	154	103	2,987
Case started but event (site visit/hearing/inquiry) has not yet happened	6,548	632	491	7,691
Event has happened/started but decision not yet issued	1,144	126	124	1,414
Total	11,754	982	722	13,586

Source: Horizon

Note there are 128 cases that have no procedure type recorded (see Background Quality Report for more detail) These are included in the total but excluded from the breakdown by procedure.

Data note 1 - the count of open cases from December 2020 onwards has been revised to include some specialist casework types that were previously excluded: High Hedge (HH), Hedgerow (HGW) and Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Data note 2 – there is a known anomaly that means that the number of open cases does not exactly follow the volumes of cases closed or received (for example the number of open cases can increase between months even though the number closed exceeded the number received). The main reasons for this have been identified and are detailed in the Background Quality Report. The inspectorate are Investigating how to introduce new processes to improve the quality of this data which once complete may result in revisions to the number of open cases.

Inspectors

Table 11 below shows the number of inspectors in the Planning Inspectorate in each month from May 2021 to April 2022¹⁰. 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 365 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in May 2022 – with a full-time equivalent of 326.

Table 11: Planning Inspectors – Headcount and FTE; June 2021 to May 2022 (at end of month)

Month	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22
Headcount	349	347	346	345	351	360	361	360	357	357	355	365
FTE	310.8	308.4	307.8	306.6	314.0	323.2	322.8	320.9	318.9	319.1	316.6	325.9

¹⁰ Data as at the last day of the month.

Source: SAP HR

As above, Planning Inspectors work on a broader range of work than the appeals featured in this Release. 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).

Revisions to previous release

Data in the previous statistical release may have changed between being published last month and what is shown this month. Where changes have occurred (the volume numbers have changed by more than five, or the timeliness measures have changed by greater than 0.5 weeks) the tables in this release give the most recent figures. Information about which tables this applies to, can be found in Annex D and the separate Background Quality Report.

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

Planning

Note: where there are fewer than 20 decisions, the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful.

Procedure	Measure	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	1,192	1,021	917	1,323	1,000	1,274	1,204	1,052	1,359	1,551	937	1,080	13,910
	Median Average Weeks	19.9	19.7	22.4	23.1	25.0	24.1	24.2	24.6	23.9	23.1	24.3	26.4	23.0
	Mean Average Weeks	23.5	23.3	25.2	26.2	27.5	26.3	25.8	26.4	25.4	25.0	25.2	27.7	25.4
	Standard Deviation	11.9	11.3	12.0	12.3	12.7	12.0	11.5	12.4	12.5	14.3	12.3	13.7	12.5
Hearings	Decisions	39	43	37	22	25	37	41	33	30	36	33	43	419
	Median Average Weeks	45.4	42.0	37.4	50.4	54.3	45.9	49.4	55.9	43.6	48.8	52.7	61.4	47.6
	Mean Average Weeks	49.2	42.7	41.3	54.7	54.7	54.3	56.7	70.7	51.5	52.8	63.0	90.0	55.3
	Standard Deviation	20.7	16.5	18.6	24.0	20.6	34.1	29.7	39.0	27.0	20.0	34.7	58.4	33.4
Inquires	Decisions	37	13	16	20	8	19	17	23	23	25	18	26	245
	Median Average Weeks	36.9	30.9	30.0	27.9	43.2	28.6	23.9	31.9	42.1	28.0	34.8	32.1	32.6
	Mean Average Weeks	53.5	53.5	50.3	36.6	40.0	36.8	29.1	41.0	47.0	35.6	37.7	43.6	42.8
	Standard Deviation	37.3	51.6	53.9	28.8	13.5	18.7	10.5	25.4	19.7	15.1	13.4	27.0	29.8
All Planning Cases	Decisions	1,268	1,077	970	1,365	1,033	1,330	1,262	1,108	1,412	1,612	988	1,149	14,574
	Median Average Weeks	25.2	24.4	26.2	26.9	28.3	27.2	26.8	28.1	26.3	25.8	26.7	30.3	26.6
	Mean Average Weeks	20.7	20.4	23.0	23.6	25.3	24.6	24.6	25.2	24.2	23.6	25.0	27.0	23.6
	Standard Deviation	15.2	13.7	14.7	13.5	13.6	14.1	13.7	16.2	13.9	15.1	15.3	21.6	15.1

- The median time to decision for planning written representations was 2.1 weeks higher in May 2022 compared to April 2022.
- The standard deviation of time to decision for planning written representations has varied between 11.3 weeks and 14.3 weeks over the past 12 months.
- The median for planning hearings during May 2022 increased by 8.7 weeks compared to April 2022
- The median for planning inquiries during May 2022 reduced by 2.7 weeks compared to April 2022

Enforcement

Note: where there are fewer than 20 decisions, the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful. This applies to hearing decisions in all months other than June and July 2021 and April and May 2022; and to inquiry decisions in all months other than July, August and November 2021, and January 2022.

Procedure	Measure	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	140	137	139	122	139	156	137	155	204	225	131	164	1,849
	Median Average Weeks	29.6	26.0	35.4	28.1	32.7	31.6	37.4	31.7	28.6	42.3	36.7	45.9	31.3
	Mean Average Weeks	33.3	32.2	40.0	33.8	38.7	42.1	41.5	37.2	36.7	54.7	44.8	48.1	40.4
	Standard Deviation	17.9	19.6	25.8	16.8	22.4	28.2	23.9	22.1	22.0	39.0	29.1	28.9	27.0
Hearings	Decisions	39	22	11	18	7	9	10	19	6	11	31	41	224
	Median Average Weeks	61.6	67.3	56.0	50.8	53.0	55.3	60.5	66.7	55.7	63.0	118.9	170.3	67.0
	Mean Average Weeks	62.6	64.1	70.7	60.0	66.1	82.7	71.6	81.8	72.3	64.9	111.8	140.5	85.5
	Standard Deviation	18.5	17.9	34.2	31.1	27.9	46.6	33.7	47.4	36.3	22.5	19.0	50.7	45.0
Inquires	Decisions	19	20	37	8	7	28	13	34	11	17	12	7	213
	Median Average Weeks	104.9	90.6	104.1	101.6	117.6	107.6	60.9	87.3	84.0	86.0	88.5	86.7	91.5
	Mean Average Weeks	108.0	92.9	122.3	94.5	147.4	118.3	48.0	90.9	71.9	58.3	49.3	78.0	90.9
	Standard Deviation	30.7	35.0	34.9	32.0	52.2	26.8	27.1	15.4	44.0	48.0	60.7	37.2	36.8
All Enforcement Cases	Decisions	198	179	187	148	153	193	160	208	221	253	174	212	2,286
	Median Average Weeks	38.9	32.3	41.6	33.2	34.0	39.9	39.1	37.5	31.3	44.3	48.0	57.9	38.4
	Mean Average Weeks	45.9	42.7	54.5	40.7	43.6	53.5	45.0	49.5	40.0	57.3	59.7	67.2	49.8
	Standard Deviation	29.8	29.4	38.3	26.3	30.2	37.6	26.4	32.4	26.7	39.9	40.8	50.2	35.8

- The mean and median measures for enforcement written representation decisions show considerable variation month to month but no clear trend. The median for May 2022 increased by 9.2 weeks compared to April 2022.
- The time to decision for enforcement hearings and inquiries is generally more than twice the time for written representation decisions. The median for hearings during May was 170 weeks.
- The number of decisions issued in May for enforcement cases decided with hearings was 41 which is more than double the monthly average over the past twelve months. The median time taken to decide those cases is also approximately double the monthly median over the past year. This relates to a large number of linked complex cases that were decided in May.
- Enforcement hearings show variable trends for all three measures; mean, median and standard deviation. There are smaller numbers of decisions for this casework / procedure group that can influence these measures.
- Enforcement inquiries are generally taking longer than they were a year ago. As with planning hearings, the effect of the pandemic is evident in these measures. Also, this grouping can be disproportionately affected by cases that involve multiple linked appeals (for

example multiple people served an enforcement notice by a local authority appeal to The Planning Inspectorate, each person appealing is treated as a separate appeal, but all appeals are decided in one decision letter by one Inspector).

Specialist

Note: where there are fewer than 20 decisions, the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful. This applies to all months' hearings decisions; and all months inquiries decisions.

Note 2: This table includes revisions to previously published data. Please see Annex E for further information

Procedure	Measure	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	59	43	49	30	47	27	57	43	32	40	91	43	561
	Median Average Weeks	26.9	21.0	17.3	24.3	30.4	17.3	24.9	29.0	23.9	24.1	11.3	23.3	21.6
	Mean Average Weeks	34.5	28.3	28.6	44.9	46.6	21.3	36.1	35.0	34.4	32.4	23.2	33.5	31.6
	Standard Deviation	25.4	21.7	24.7	36.1	35.5	14.7	27.5	30.1	30.1	29.8	22.1	27.8	27.5
Hearings	Decisions	2	0	3	0	0	1	2	3	1	4	3	3	22
	Median Average Weeks	100.8	-	95.0	-	-	101.9	101.9	130.1	149.1	127.9	141.0	90.9	107.9
	Mean Average Weeks	100.8	-	78.3	-	-	101.9	101.9	93.2	149.1	118.7	141.5	85.7	103.8
	Standard Deviation	7.1	-	31.5	-	-	0.0	26.2	58.0	0.0	22.9	15.4	29.0	37.5
Inquires	Decisions	0	4	3	2	3	4	2	3	1	4	2	3	31
	Median Average Weeks	-	94.3	88.4	75.2	105.3	113.4	113.9	95.1	119.7	109.4	44.8	66.9	92.9
	Mean Average Weeks	-	90.3	84.6	75.2	84.7	121.7	113.9	84.0	119.7	110.0	44.8	89.4	93.9
	Standard Deviation	-	9.6	11.5	8.2	33.7	43.4	15.6	29.6	0.0	61.3	1.6	49.0	39.2
All Specialist Cases	Decisions	61	47	55	32	50	32	61	49	34	48	96	49	614
	Median Average Weeks	28.0	22.4	17.7	27.7	32.1	19.7	27.1	29.4	25.4	27.2	12.7	27.3	23.4
	Mean Average Weeks	36.6	33.6	34.4	46.8	48.9	36.4	40.8	41.6	40.5	46.7	27.4	40.4	37.1
	Standard Deviation	27.7	27.1	29.6	35.7	36.6	40.7	32.5	37.0	37.8	45.5	30.0	34.8	34.0

- The number of decisions for Specialist cases is low (see Table 4), and this makes it less easy to identify trends for Specialist cases decided by hearings and inquiries.
- The highest volume of decisions is against Written Representations, and over the last 12 months the volume and time measures see variable trends.
- The time to decision for specialist hearings and inquiries is generally more than twice the time for written representation decisions.
- The median for time to specialist written representation decision varies between 11 weeks (April 22) and 30 weeks (October 21).

Annex B – Detailed Information on timeliness (May 2022)

The information below is published today on the number and length of decisions made in May 2022¹¹:

Note: when there are fewer than 20 decisions the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful. This applies to the 7 enforcement cases managed by inquiry.

Casework Type	Procedure Type	Median (weeks)	Mean (weeks)	Decisions
s78 planning appeals	Written Representations	31.0	28.7	730
	Hearings	90.7	62.1	42
	Inquiries	43.6	32.1	26
Householder appeals	Written Representations	18.8	15.0	296
Enforcement appeals	Written Representations	48.1	45.9	164
	Hearings	140.5	170.3	41
	Inquiries	86.7	78.0	7

Cells shaded grey had fewer than 20 decisions

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:

Note: when there are fewer than 20 decisions the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful. This applies to the 16 s78 cases being managed through inquiries, which had an event in May.

	s78 planning appeals			Householder appeals
	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	
Weeks between valid date & start date				
Median (average)	11.6	3.0	3.0	2.0
Mean (average)	11.8	15.2	5.1	2.9
Cases that started in May 2022	853	47	29	358
Weeks between start date & event date				
Median (average)	10.0	19.1	14.4	8.9
Mean (average)	12.6	34.3	16.4	11.0
Cases where an event occurred during May 2022	682	36	16	332
Weeks between event date & decision date				
Median (average)	3.7	6.1	9.8	3.1
Mean (average)	5.5	6.9	11.1	3.9
Cases that have been decided in May 2022	730	42	26	296

¹¹ Also published on gov.uk here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeals-average-timescales-for-arranging-inquiries-and-hearings>

Explanation of date terminology

Valid date	When a case is deemed to have been validly received. Note – this is not always the date the case was validated. If a case is validated after the date it was validly received, it is the date it was validly received that is the valid date.
Start date	When a timetable, on how the appeal will progress, is issued to both the appellant and local authority. This timetable tells the appellant when to submit the information the Inspectors need to determine the appeal. It also tells the local authority when to notify interested parties about the appeal.
Event date	When the site visit, hearing, or inquiry occurred.
Decision date	When the decision was issued by The Planning Inspectorate.

Find out more about the process here - <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision/after-you-appeal>

Annex C – 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 (including Schedule 14 cases), Purchase orders, Tree Preservation Orders, High Hedges appeals, Hedgerow appeals, Wayleave, Compulsory Purchase Orders, Secretary of State, Transport, ERP Appeals and Coastal Access. Additional casework types have been added to this category over time.

Annex D – Revisions to the data tables

This Annex lists all revisions made to the data since the last statistical release.

Note: Classed as a revision are any values which have changed by more than five (when measuring number of decisions/ cases) or more than 0.5 weeks (for mean, median or standard deviation of weeks).

Table	Revisions
Table 1	Events held March 2022.
Table 2	Closed cases December 2021; Received cases April 2022.
Table 7	Specialist cases valid to decision: mean, median and standard deviation February 2022; Specialist cases valid to decision: mean and standard deviation March 2022.
Annex A	Specialist Casework WRs: Median, mean and standard deviation February and March 2022;

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.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Measuring weeks	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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.

Term	Explanation
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	A hearing involves the submission of written evidence by the main parties and a hearing once all the written submissions have been received. 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. Source: Planning Portal
Inquiries	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. At some point during or on conclusion of the inquiry the inspector and the main parties will undertake a site visit. Source: Planning Portal
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).

Term	Explanation
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
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.
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.
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:

Media enquiries 0303 444 5004
email press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Public enquiries email statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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

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>