



The Planning Inspectorate

Official Statistics
23rd February 2023

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 of decision-making, an area of particular interest for stakeholders. 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 February 2022 to January 2023
- 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.

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.

Summary

Time to decide cases

The median decision time for cases decided in January 2023 was 31 weeks. During recent months additional Inspector resource has been allocated to cases decided by hearing or enquiry; as a result the number of open written representations cases has increased and we have seen longer decision times for these cases.

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

Procedure type	Last 12 months	January 2023
Written Representations	27 weeks	30 weeks
Hearings	58 weeks	59 weeks
Inquiries	45 weeks	74 weeks
All Cases	27 weeks	31 weeks

The median time for planning cases was 28 weeks in January 2023, the median in the past 12 months is 26 weeks.

Enforcement decisions made in January 2023 had a median decision time of 63 weeks, with the 12 month median being 49 weeks.

The median time for planning appeals decided by inquiry under the Rosewell Process over the 12 months to January 2023 is 30 weeks.

Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate made 17,628 appeal decisions¹ in the last 12 months, an average of 1,469 per month. The number of decisions in January 2023 was 1,458, just below the 12 month average.

There were 1,322 written representations decisions in January 2023; and 16,310 in the last 12 months. Pre-pandemic levels were approximately between 1,600 and 2,000 decisions per month.

There were 827 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, and during January 2023, 62 decisions were issued, the highest number of decisions over the past 12 months. Pre-pandemic levels for hearing decisions were between 50 and 100 decisions per month.

There were 491 decisions made on inquiries during the last 12 months, with 74 in January 2023. Decisions for inquiries since February 2022 have ranged between 32 and 78. Pre-pandemic levels for inquiry decisions were between 15 and 90 decisions per month.

Planning Inspectors

There were 406 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate at the end of January 2023.

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 C explains the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

Decisions, Events & Open Cases

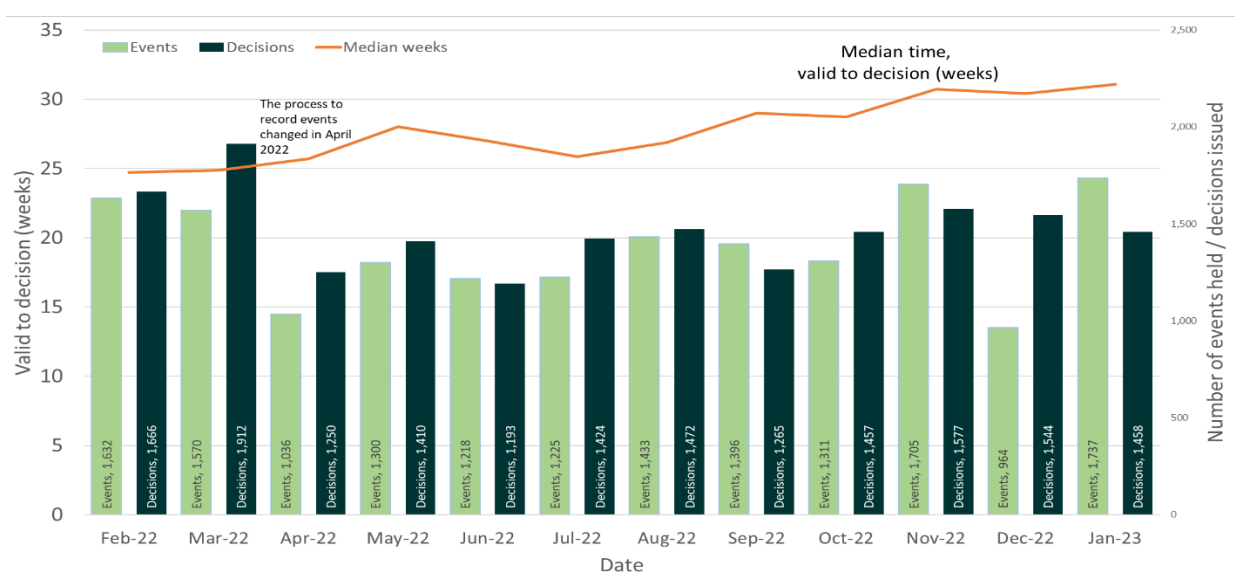
The number of decisions issued in January 2023 was 1,458, slightly lower than the average number of decisions per month over the past 12 months.

The number of events recorded for January 2023 was 1,737, the average over the past 12 months was 1,377.

There has been a rise in the median valid to decision time, from 25 weeks in February 2022 to 31 weeks in January 2023, as seen in Figure 1 and Table 1 below.

There are no clear trends for the number of events and decisions per month. However, the Christmas and Easter breaks do impact on the number of events arranged during December and April.

Figure 1: Number of events held², decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; February 2022 to January 2023



Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System

Note: The process and admin system used for events data has changed from April 2022. See Background Quality Report for more information

Table 1: Number of events held, decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; February 2022 to January 2023

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

Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Events Held	1,632	1,570	1,036	1,300	1,218	1,225	1,433	1,396	1,311	1,705	964	1,737	16,527
Decisions	1,666	1,912	1,250	1,410	1,193	1,424	1,472	1,265	1,457	1,577	1,544	1,458	17,628
Median	24.7	24.9	25.7	28.0	27.0	25.9	26.9	29.0	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	27.6

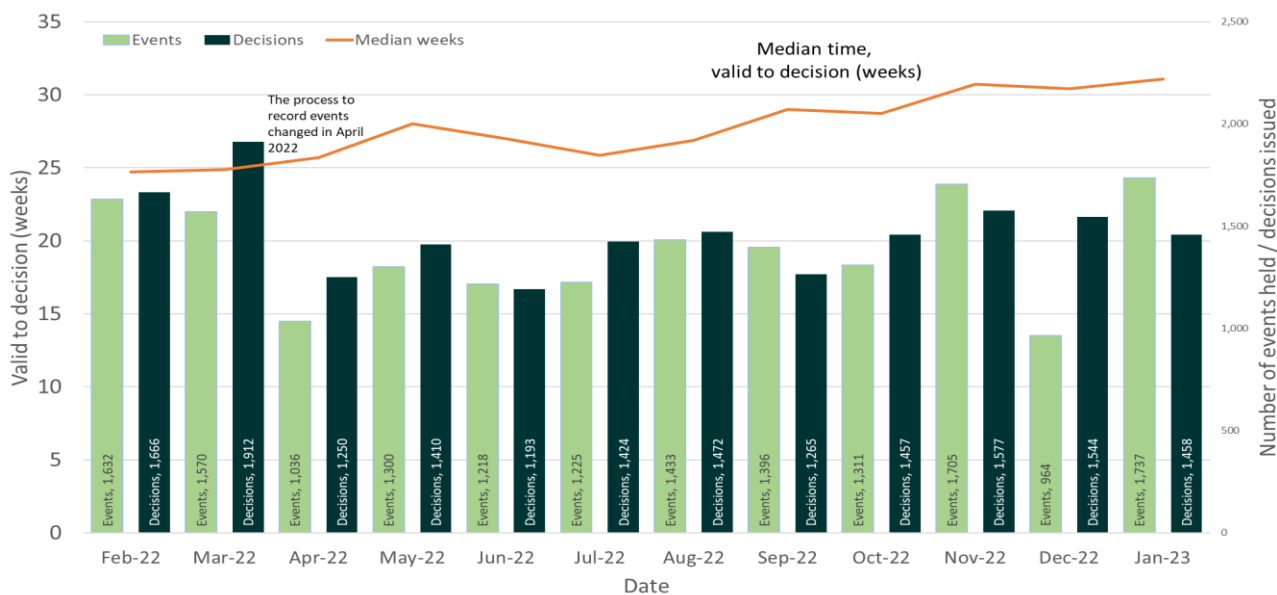
Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System.

Figure 2 below shows the number of cases received, closed and open for each of the last 12 months. The number of open cases has been rising over recent months, because most months more cases are received than closed.

² A site visit, hearing, or inquiry.

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; February 2022 to January 2023



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.

Table 2: Number of cases received, closed and open; February 2022 to January 2023

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

Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Received	1,718	1,829	1,632	1,973	1,712	1,702	1,642	1,730	1,791	1,825	1,564	1,624	20,742
Closed	1,873	2,156	1,414	1,630	1,386	1,603	1,669	1,427	1,660	1,803	1,739	1,694	20,054
Open	13293	12976	13183	13497	13879	13976	13965	14239	14439	14458	14350	14342	

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Number of Decisions

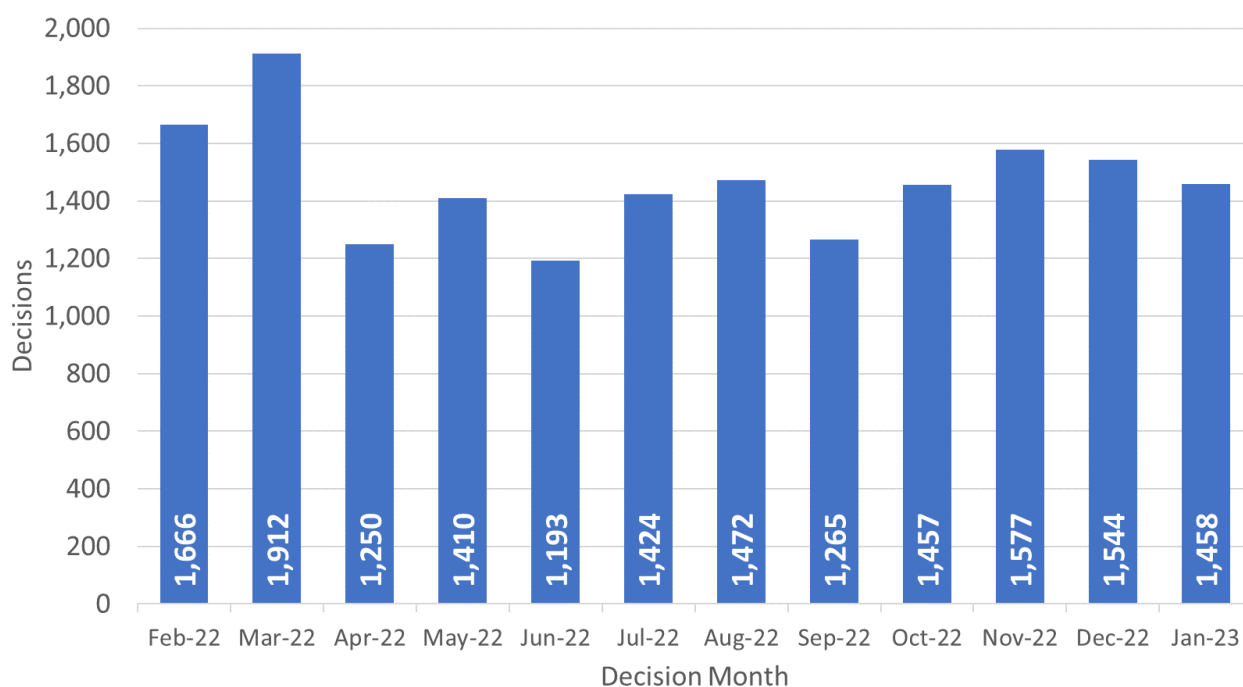
The Planning Inspectorate has made 17,478 appeal decisions³ in the last 12 months. There were 1,458 cases decided in January 2023. Table 3 below shows the monthly breakdown with fewer decisions for the months of April, June and September 2022.

Table 3: Appeal Decisions; February 2022 to January 2023

Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Decisions	1,666	1,912	1,250	1,410	1,193	1,424	1,472	1,265	1,457	1,577	1,544	1,458	17,628

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Figure 3 – Appeal Decisions; February to January 2023



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 Plans⁴, 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 (16,310) were made on written representations. This is ninety two percent of all appeal decisions made. Table 4 shows that 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 1,322 decisions in January 2023.

³ 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 C shows the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

⁴ 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)

There were 827 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, the monthly average being 69. During January 2023 62 decisions were issued. Pre-pandemic levels for hearing decisions were between 50 and 100 decisions per month. In January 2023 74 decisions were made for inquiries, the second highest number of decision in the past 12 months.. Decisions for inquiries since February have ranged between 25 and 79. Pre-pandemic levels for inquiry decisions were between 15 and 90 decisions per month.

Table 4: Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; February 2022 to January 2023

Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Written Representations	1,594	1,815	1,154	1,286	1,105	1,337	1,354	1,172	1,374	1,456	1,341	1,322	16,310
Hearings	37	51	65	89	54	62	39	69	53	89	157	62	827
Inquiries	35	46	31	35	34	25	79	24	30	32	46	74	491
Total	1,666	1,912	1,250	1,410	1,193	1,424	1,472	1,265	1,457	1,577	1,544	1,458	17,628
Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Planning	1,409	1,603	980	1,143	1,004	1,171	1,157	1,016	1,261	1,337	1,294	1,225	14,600
Enforcement	220	253	174	215	138	166	224	184	142	174	193	184	2,267
Specialist	37	56	96	52	51	87	91	65	54	66	57	49	761
Total	1,666	1,912	1,250	1,410	1,193	1,424	1,472	1,265	1,457	1,577	1,544	1,458	17,628

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.

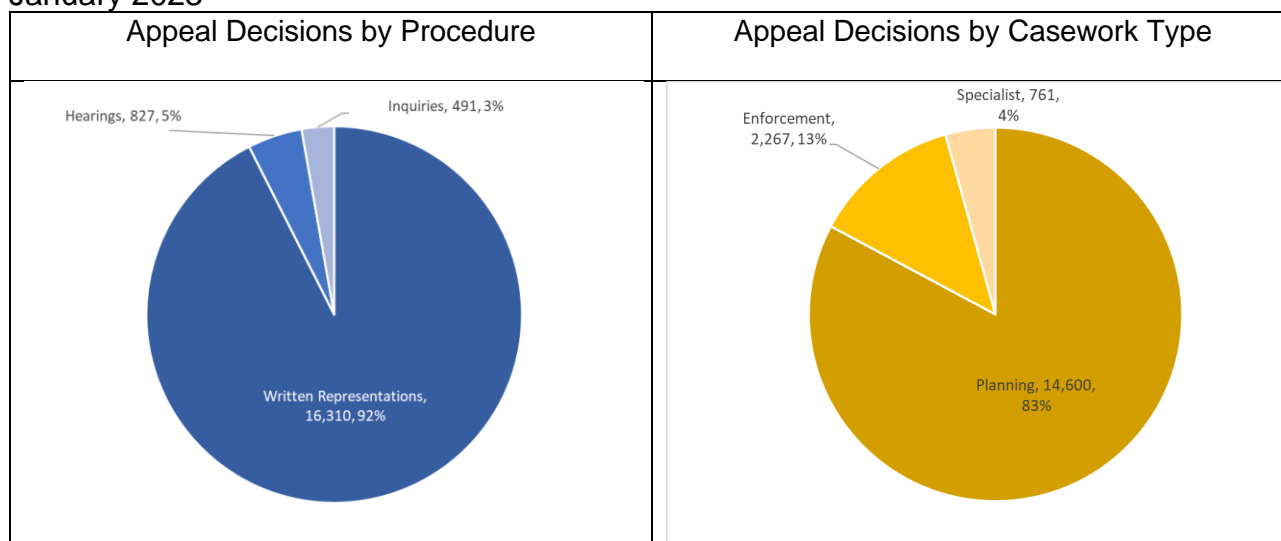
What are Enforcement cases? Enforcement covers enforcement appeals (i.e., appeals against the issue of an enforcement notice served by a local planning authority for alleged breaches of planning control), enforcement listed building notice appeals and lawful development certificate appeals.

What are Specialist cases? 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, Environmental Permitting Appeals and Coastal Access. Additional casework types have been added to this category over time.

The large majority of cases over the past 12 months were planning (14,600). This is about eighty-three per cent of all appeal decisions made. There were 2,267 enforcement decisions and 761 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 189. March 22 had the most enforcement decisions of the last 12 months. Specialist casework figures continue to vary each month, from a low of 37 in February 2022 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 decided at the same time.

Figure 4 – Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; February 2022 to January 2023



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 informed plans and decisions. 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 28 weeks; and 31 weeks for January 2023. Figure 5 shows the median has been between 25 and 31 weeks for each of the last 12 months; and has been increasing.

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. This means that any delay in 'validating' the appeal is included in the time to make a decision.

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

Table 5 also shows the mean decision time for the last 12 months is 34 weeks. Each month the median is less than the mean, due to the impact of very long cases. Also included in the table is the *standard deviation* of decision timeliness, which is a measure of variation.

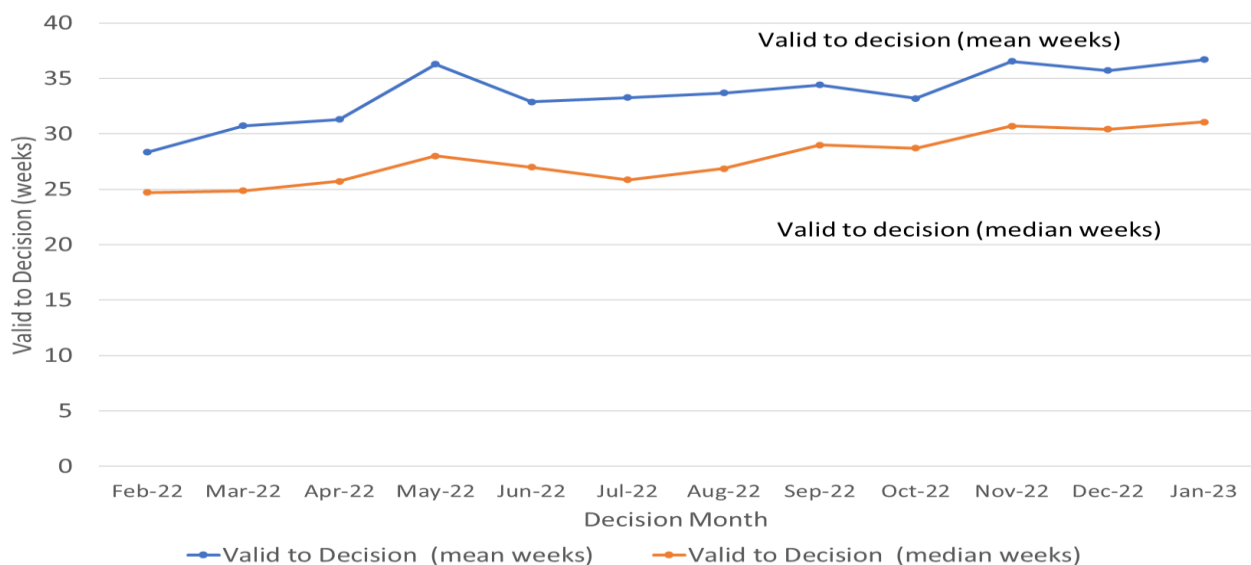
What are mean, median, and standard deviation?	
Measure	Definition
Mean	The total time taken divided by the number of cases. Also referred to as the 'average'. A measure of how long each case would take, if the total time taken was spread evenly across all cases.
Median	This is the time taken by the '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; February 2022 to January 2023

Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	24.7	24.9	25.7	28.0	27.0	25.9	26.9	29.0	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	27.6
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	28.3	30.7	31.3	36.3	32.9	33.3	33.7	34.4	33.2	36.5	35.7	36.7	33.5
Standard Deviation (weeks)	17.6	24.3	24.8	31.2	25.1	27.0	23.1	22.8	19.8	22.4	22.0	24.1	23.9

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Figure 5: Median and mean Time to Decision; February 2022 to January 2023



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 representations⁵, both types take roughly twice as long on average across the last 12 months. Because 19 of every 20 cases are by written

⁵ Written representations includes Rights of Way Schedule 14 appeals

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 a small number of large values than mean times, so are the focus of this commentary. The median time for written representations over the 12 months to January 2023 is 27 weeks. The median time for hearings over the 12 months to December 2022 is 58 weeks.

The median decision time for inquiries was unusually high in January. This is due to four cases, three of which were linked, taking a very long time. They experienced delays first related to the pandemic and then a necessary adjournment. These few exceptionally long decision times have resulted in the monthly median for inquiries being at 74 weeks for January and the 12 month average rising to 45 weeks.

Table 6: Mean and Median Time to Decision, with Standard Deviation, by Procedure; February 2022 to January 2023

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

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

Measure	Procedure	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	WR	24.1	24.3	24.4	27.0	26.1	25.1	26.1	28.5	28.4	30.1	29.1	29.8	26.7
	HRG	45.7	52.9	108.3	94.0	61.0	58.2	63.0	41.1	40.9	51.0	54.4	59.0	57.9
	INQ	57.3	42.1	38.4	44.3	39.6	31.1	68.6	36.5	29.7	41.1	38.6	74.4	45.3
	All	24.7	24.9	25.7	28.0	27.0	25.9	26.9	29.0	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	27.6
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	WR	27.0	29.1	27.2	30.4	29.7	30.3	30.7	32.8	32.5	34.8	32.8	33.5	30.9
	HRG	57.5	61.1	90.8	112.3	86.7	85.3	67.8	51.4	45.1	56.5	58.6	61.7	69.8
	INQ	60.7	60.7	57.7	57.7	51.3	60.6	68.2	62.3	44.8	58.4	42.1	73.0	59.9
	All	28.3	30.7	31.3	36.3	32.9	33.3	33.7	34.4	33.2	36.5	35.7	36.7	33.5
Standard Deviation (weeks)	WR	15.1	22.3	17.2	18.4	17.1	20.8	19.0	20.1	18.6	19.7	18.1	18.3	19.0
	HRG	33.1	27.6	37.6	59.8	61.7	55.6	43.1	31.5	24.8	34.7	35.6	32.1	46.1
	INQ	35.4	45.8	46.2	36.7	35.4	53.8	30.4	54.9	41.4	43.4	18.3	50.4	42.1
	All	17.6	24.3	24.8	31.2	25.1	27.0	23.1	22.8	19.8	22.4	22.0	24.1	23.9
Decisions	WR	1,594	1,815	1,154	1,286	1,105	1,337	1,354	1,172	1,374	1,456	1,341	1,322	16,310
	HRG	37	51	65	89	54	62	39	69	53	89	157	62	827
	INQ	35	46	31	35	34	25	79	24	30	32	46	74	491
	All	1,666	1,912	1,250	1,410	1,193	1,424	1,472	1,265	1,457	1,577	1,544	1,458	17,628

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 times for specialist cases. Table 7 and Figure 6 show the median time for planning cases has been 24 weeks and above for the last twelve months.

Table 7: Decisions, Mean, Median and Standard Deviation of Time to Decision – Planning, Enforcement, Specialist Cases; February 2022 to January 2023

Casework Category	Measure	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Planning Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	24.3	23.6	24.9	27.0	26.0	25.0	25.1	27.0	27.4	29.1	28.9	28.3	26.1
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	26.3	25.7	26.6	30.3	29.3	29.1	28.7	30.8	30.6	33.0	31.4	31.5	29.4
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	13.9	15.0	15.3	21.6	17.9	20.4	17.7	18.2	15.9	17.6	16.0	16.2	17.3
Enforcement Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	31.1	44.6	48.0	56.1	40.9	42.2	58.6	44.7	44.1	52.1	62.4	63.4	49.1
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	39.9	57.5	59.7	66.6	56.3	56.8	56.1	51.1	50.5	59.6	62.0	67.9	57.0
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	26.7	39.8	40.8	50.0	47.0	40.9	29.6	29.3	26.7	32.3	31.5	36.6	37.4
Specialist Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	26.0	33.7	12.7	28.4	31.4	24.7	31.3	29.4	35.4	35.3	27.0	36.9	29.1
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	39.5	54.3	27.4	42.0	41.6	45.0	42.3	43.8	47.9	49.0	44.7	49.1	43.1
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	36.4	46.1	30.0	35.0	27.1	41.5	29.7	37.4	40.3	35.0	34.3	34.1	36.3

Source: Horizon and Picaso.

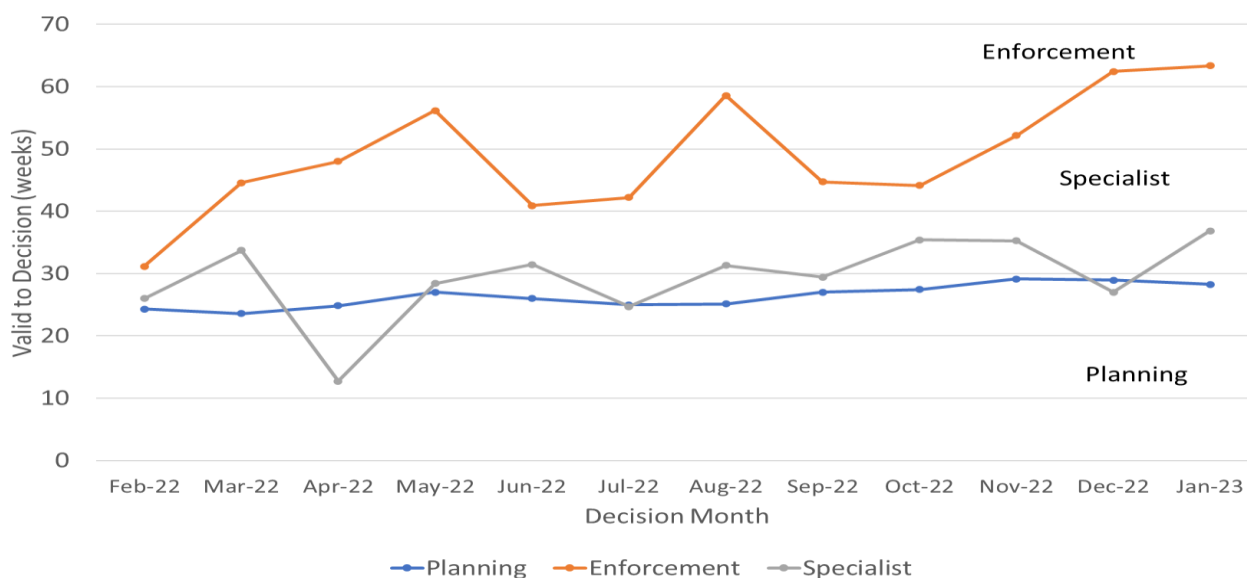
Annex A gives information on median and mean time to decision, with standard deviation, for the three procedure types, split by planning, enforcement, and specialist casework categories.

Enforcement decisions made in the past 12 months had a median decision time of 49 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 for specialist decisions have been shorter than enforcement decisions, and quite similar to the median for planning decisions.

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

Figure 6 – Median Time to Decision by Casework Category: February 2022 to January 2023



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 January 2023 is 30 weeks and the median time to decision for January 2023 was 29 weeks.

Table 8: Decisions, Mean and Median Time to Decision, Planning Inquiry Cases under Rosewell Process; February 2022 to January 2023

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

Measure	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Decisions	23	22	14	24	21	13	18	11	22	19	38	22	247
Median (weeks)	42.1	30.0	30.2	32.1	31.0	23.3	26.0	28.6	25.9	29.4	38.6	28.6	30.0
Mean (weeks)	47.0	35.5	35.5	41.6	33.0	23.9	30.9	29.5	29.1	38.0	36.9	31.0	35.2
St. Dev. (weeks)	19.7	14.2	13.6	19.2	9.8	4.6	14.0	9.4	11.0	20.8	6.5	10.3	14.8

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

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; February 2022 to January 2023

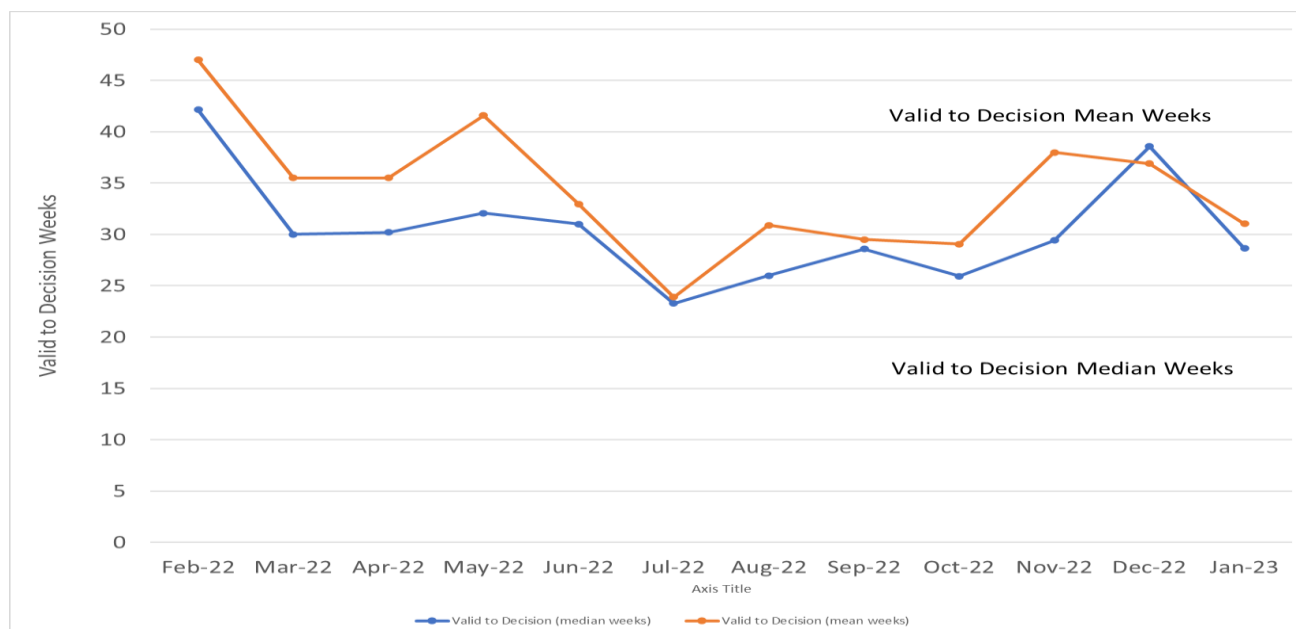
Note: Number of decisions for September is affected by decisions being recorded after statistics downloaded.

Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Decisions	0	3	3	1	1	2	3	0	1	1	1	3	19

Source: Horizon

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; February 2022 to January 2023



Source: Horizon

Open Cases

At the end of January 2023, the Planning Inspectorate had 14,342 cases open⁹. 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 12,812 cases being handled through written representations; 834 through hearings; and 645 through inquiries, as well as 51 not currently allocated a procedure type. This is not the number of ‘live’ hearings and inquiries since it includes cases

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>

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.

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.

Table 10: Open cases by procedure and stage, as of end of February 2023

Stage	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	Total
Cases received but yet to be deemed valid	1,840	65	6	1,911
Cases deemed valid but yet to 'start'	3,294	136	103	3,568
Case started but event (site visit/hearing/inquiry) has not yet happened	7,620	581	454	8,668
Event has happened/started but decision not yet issued	58	52	82	195
Total	12,812	834	645	14,342

Source: Horizon

Note 1 - there are 51 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.

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 February 2022 to January 2023¹⁰. 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 406 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in November 2022 – with a full-time equivalent of 363.

Table 11: Planning Inspectors – Headcount and FTE; February 2022 to January 2023 (at end of month)

Month	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23
Headcount	357	357	355	365	371	378	376	388	391	390	390	406
FTE	318.9	319.1	316.6	325.9	331.5	337.7	335.0	346.2	348.9	348.3	348.3	363.2

Source: SAP HR

¹⁰ Data as at the last day of the month.

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 Planning and Appeal Decision Suppliers (previously referred to as 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 C 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. This applies to April, July and September 2022 for inquiries decisions.

Procedure	Measure	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	1,356	1,543	932	1,075	945	1,110	1,109	958	1,197	1,254	1,172	1,161	13,812
	Median Average Weeks	23.9	23.1	24.2	26.3	25.4	24.4	24.9	26.9	27.4	29.0	28.1	28.1	25.9
	Mean Average Weeks	25.3	25.0	25.2	27.6	27.7	26.9	27.9	30.1	30.4	32.3	30.4	30.9	28.2
	Standard Deviation	12.5	14.3	12.2	13.8	14.5	13.9	15.7	17.1	15.6	16.4	14.3	15.3	14.9
Hearings	Decisions	30	35	31	43	37	46	27	47	41	63	83	39	522
	Median Average Weeks	43.6	48.4	53.0	61.4	51.1	55.9	42.6	38.3	32.0	39.0	34.3	44.0	45.3
	Mean Average Weeks	51.5	52.5	64.8	90.0	66.4	81.2	55.4	45.8	39.7	44.8	42.9	47.3	55.5
	Standard Deviation	27.0	20.2	34.9	58.4	41.6	55.3	43.0	30.5	23.1	30.1	29.5	27.7	39.8
Inquires	Decisions	23	25	17	25	22	15	21	11	23	20	39	25	266
	Median Average Weeks	42.1	28.0	33.7	33.6	31.1	24.0	26.0	28.6	25.9	29.4	38.6	29.7	30.5
	Mean Average Weeks	47.0	35.6	37.4	45.3	34.6	29.4	37.5	29.5	28.5	41.2	38.6	35.6	37.3
	Standard Deviation	19.7	15.1	13.7	26.1	12.0	14.8	27.2	9.4	11.1	24.6	12.4	19.2	19.0
All Planning Cases	Decisions	1,409	1,603	980	1,143	1,004	1,171	1,157	1,016	1,261	1,337	1,294	1,225	14,600
	Median Average Weeks	24.3	23.6	24.9	27.0	26.0	25.0	25.1	27.0	27.4	29.1	28.9	28.3	26.1
	Mean Average Weeks	26.3	25.7	26.6	30.3	29.3	29.1	28.7	30.8	30.6	33.0	31.4	31.5	29.4
	Standard Deviation	13.9	15.0	15.3	21.6	17.9	20.4	17.7	18.2	15.9	17.6	16.0	16.2	17.3

Enforcement

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

Procedure	Measure	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	203	225	131	165	119	153	164	159	128	145	119	122	1,833
	Median Average Weeks	28.6	42.6	36.7	45.7	37.3	39.6	40.0	44.4	39.7	49.3	53.7	53.5	41.9
	Mean Average Weeks	36.6	55.0	44.8	47.6	43.1	53.0	46.3	48.1	49.0	54.1	54.1	56.7	48.8
	Standard Deviation	21.9	38.9	29.1	28.6	24.2	36.3	25.3	23.4	26.9	28.5	27.7	23.6	29.4
Hearings	Decisions	6	11	31	43	11	10	6	14	11	20	71	15	249
	Median Average Weeks	55.7	63.0	118.9	170.3	223.7	75.0	99.6	39.7	53.7	93.0	68.1	74.7	89.1
	Mean Average Weeks	72.3	64.9	111.8	136.5	165.3	107.1	101.1	57.5	64.6	85.5	75.2	80.8	95.4
	Standard Deviation	36.3	22.5	19.0	52.8	70.8	64.4	25.4	30.0	22.2	19.6	33.1	22.3	47.9
Inquires	Decisions	11	17	12	7	8	3	54	11	3	9	3	47	185
	Median Average Weeks	71.9	58.3	49.3	78.0	96.1	52.7	68.6	62.3	67.6	58.6	45.1	82.0	73.3
	Mean Average Weeks	84.0	86.0	88.5	86.7	103.3	81.7	80.9	85.9	61.2	89.2	63.4	92.9	86.4
	Standard Deviation	44.0	48.0	60.7	37.2	35.9	43.7	22.2	62.5	12.2	57.6	28.7	51.4	44.5
All Enforcement Cases	Decisions	220	253	174	215	138	166	224	184	142	174	193	184	2,267
	Median Average Weeks	31.1	44.6	48.0	56.1	40.9	42.2	58.6	44.7	44.1	52.1	62.4	63.4	49.1
	Mean Average Weeks	39.9	57.5	59.7	66.6	56.3	56.8	56.1	51.1	50.5	59.6	62.0	67.9	57.0
	Standard Deviation	26.7	39.8	40.8	50.0	47.0	40.9	29.6	29.3	26.7	32.3	31.5	36.6	37.4

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.

Procedure	Measure	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	35	47	91	46	41	74	81	55	49	57	50	39	665
	Median Average Weeks	24.9	26.9	11.3	24.4	25.1	22.6	27.9	26.0	33.9	32.1	26.9	30.3	26.0
	Mean Average Weeks	33.9	42.8	23.2	35.5	37.6	35.1	38.1	37.0	41.4	42.9	39.7	37.8	36.2
	Standard Deviation	28.9	36.7	22.1	28.7	26.9	30.5	26.7	33.1	30.7	29.7	30.5	26.9	29.6
Hearings	Decisions	1	5	3	3	6	6	6	8	1	6	3	8	56
	Median Average Weeks	149.1	119.0	141.0	90.9	71.4	76.4	82.6	67.5	50.4	60.6	85.1	92.1	79.5
	Mean Average Weeks	149.1	113.3	141.5	85.7	68.0	80.7	90.5	73.5	50.4	83.6	101.4	96.4	90.1
	Standard Deviation	0.0	23.2	15.4	29.0	12.0	24.4	28.4	27.5	0.0	45.5	33.5	19.7	33.4
Inquires	Decisions	1	4	2	3	4	7	4	2	4	3	4	2	40
	Median Average Weeks	119.7	109.4	44.8	80.9	43.9	165.6	55.4	112.9	128.7	91.1	48.1	73.8	68.4
	Mean Average Weeks	119.7	110.0	44.8	94.1	39.1	118.5	56.5	112.9	126.5	80.0	60.0	73.8	87.6
	Standard Deviation	0.0	61.3	1.6	47.2	13.6	58.4	21.0	51.2	60.3	27.6	31.1	17.2	53.0
All Specialist Cases	Decisions	37	56	96	52	51	87	91	65	54	66	57	49	761
	Median Average Weeks	26.0	33.7	12.7	28.4	31.4	24.7	31.3	29.4	35.4	35.3	27.0	36.9	29.1
	Mean Average Weeks	39.5	54.3	27.4	42.0	41.6	45.0	42.3	43.8	47.9	49.0	44.7	49.1	43.1
	Standard Deviation	36.4	46.1	30.0	35.0	27.1	41.5	29.7	37.4	40.3	35.0	34.3	34.1	36.3

Annex B – Detailed Information on timeliness (January 2023)

The information below is published today on the number and length of decisions made in January 2023¹¹:

Note 1: when there are fewer than 20 decisions the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful. This applies to 15 enforcement appeals decided by hearings.

Casework Type	Procedure Type	Median (weeks)	Mean (weeks)	Decisions
s78 planning appeals	Written Representations	32.9	35.0	759
	Hearings	42.0	47.0	38
	Inquiries	29.7	35.6	25
Householder appeals	Written Representations	18.4	21.1	341
Enforcement appeals	Written Representations	53.5	56.7	122
	Hearings	74.7	80.8	15
	Inquiries	82.0	92.9	47

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:

	s78 planning appeals			Householder appeals
	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	
Weeks between valid date & start date				
Median (average)	13.1	5.7	2.3	9.9
Mean (average)	13.9	8.5	3.0	9.9
Cases that started in January 2023	764	40	34	554
Weeks between start date & event date				
Median (average)	12.9	14.7	16.0	6.6
Mean (average)	17.4	22.8	20.7	9.8
Cases where an event occurred during January 2023	880	57	27	489
Weeks between event date & decision date				
Median (average)	5.1	5.4	9.4	3.7
Mean (average)	6.5	6.5	14.3	4.6
Cases that have been decided in January 2023	696	35	24	334

Note: Only cases with both dates recorded appear in this table, meaning that numbers for cases decided and events recorded may be lower than those presented elsewhere.

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 – 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: August, September, October, November and December 2022.
Table 2	Received: December 2022; Closed: October and December 2022; Open Cases: November and December 2022.
Table 6	Valid to Decision Mean Weeks Inquiries: October 2022; Standard Deviation Inquiries: October 2022.
Table 7	Specialist Casework Standard Deviation: December 2022.
Annex A	Enforcement Written Representations Median Weeks: July 2022; Enforcement Written Representations Mean Weeks: December 2022. Specialist Casework Hearings Mean Weeks: December 2022; Specialist Casework Standard Deviation: December 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.</p> <p>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.
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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>

Term	Explanation
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).
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 (includes Rights of Way Schedule 14)	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>