



# The Planning Inspectorate

Official Statistics  
18<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## Introduction

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

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.

The Planning Inspectorate has identified a data issue for Tree Preservation Order (TPO) appeals.

- TPOs represent around 3% of appeals casework.
- These are a type of specialist casework that is recorded in a non-standard way.
- Some TPO data has been inadvertently excluded from previous data processing.
- This has been rectified, so that TPO decisions are now included in decided cases, and received cases; and decision times that include TPO cases. This means that these measures may vary from those previously published. Changes are noted in line with the published revisions policy.
- Due to the way open cases are counted, some TPO cases remain excluded from measures of open cases.

Consequently, for TPO cases in this release:

- Counts of open cases, decided cases, and received cases are marked as provisional; as are decision times that include TPO.
- Counts of open cases exclude some TPOs due to the way these are derived. Revisions are not yet possible. However an initial estimate is given in the Background Quality Report of the number of open cases omitted each month.

This statistical bulletin provides:

- Appeals decisions and events held from May 2022 to April 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 April 2023 was 29 weeks.

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

Procedure type	Last 12 months	April 2023
Written Representations	28 weeks	29 weeks
Hearings	55 weeks	37 weeks
Inquiries	53 weeks	79 weeks
All Cases	29 weeks	29 weeks

The median time for planning cases was 27 weeks in April 2023, with the 12 month median being 27 weeks.

Enforcement decisions made in April 2023 had a median decision time of 58 weeks, with the 12 month median being 55 weeks.

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

### Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate made 17,410 appeal decisions<sup>1</sup> in the last 12 months, an average of 1,451 per month. The number of decisions in April 2023 was 1,308.

There were 1,225 written representations decisions in April 2023 and 15,997 in the last 12 months.

There were 889 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, and during April 2023, 55 decisions were issued.

There were 524 decisions made on inquiries during the last 12 months, with 28 in April 2023.

### Planning Inspectors

There were 419 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate at the end of April 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> The appeal types include Planning & related appeals, Enforcement and Specialist casework (covering a range of casework types). Please note that some previous releases covered only Rights of Way orders within Specialist casework. Annex C explains the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

# Decisions, Events & Open Cases

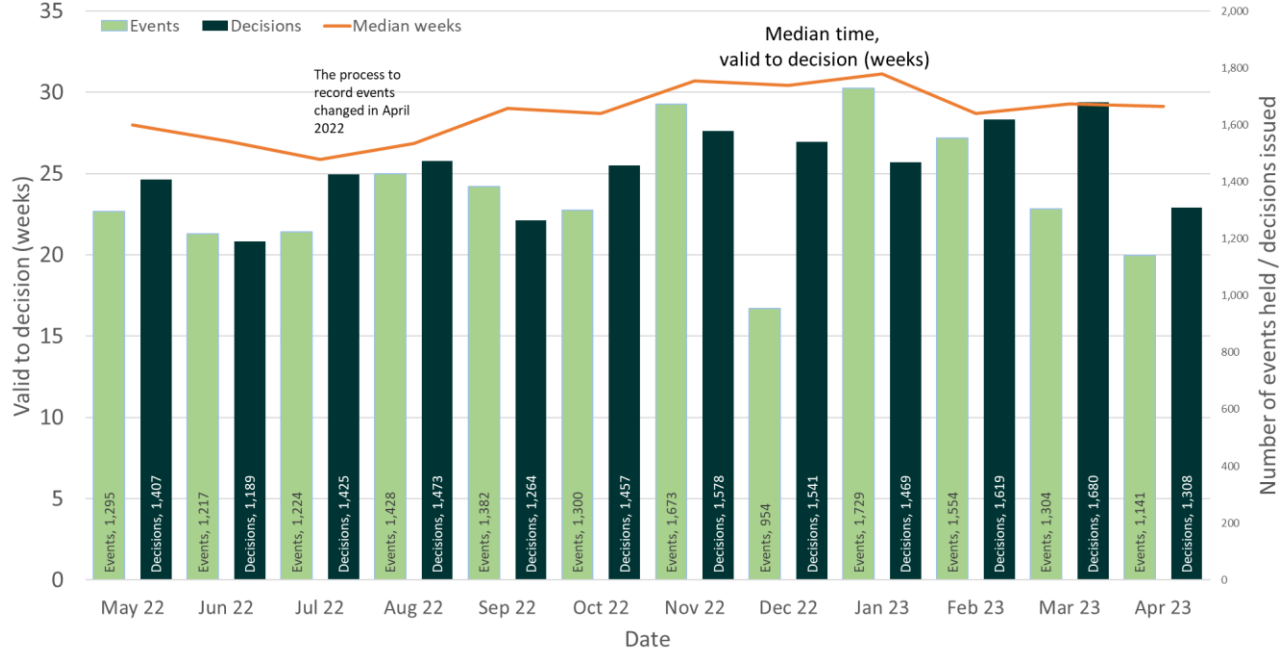
The number of decisions issued in April 2023 was 1,308, compared with a monthly average of 1,451 over the past 12 months.

The number of events recorded for April 2023 was 1,141, the average over the past 12 months was 1,350.

The median valid to decision time was 29 weeks in April 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 held<sup>2</sup>, decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; May 2022 to April 2023



Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System

Note 1: The process and admin system used for events data has changed from April 2022. See Background Quality Report for more information

Note 2: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

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

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

Note 2: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Events Held	1,295	1,217	1,224	1,428	1,382	1,300	1,673	954	1,729	1,554	1,304	1,141	16,201
Decisions	1,407	1,189	1,425	1,473	1,264	1,457	1,578	1,541	1,469	1,619	1,680	1,308	17,410
Median	28.0	27.0	25.9	26.9	29.0	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	28.7	29.3	29.1	28.7

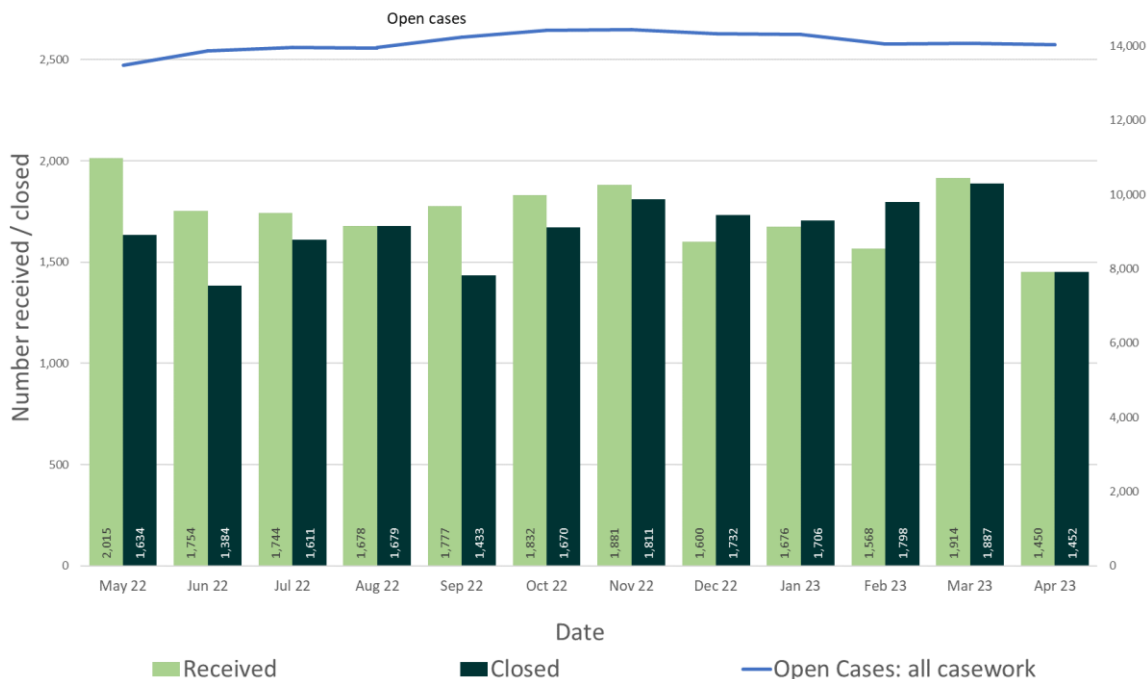
Source: Horizon, Picaso, Inspector Scheduling System.

<sup>2</sup> A site visit, hearing, or inquiry.

Figure 2 below shows the number of cases received, closed and open for each of the last 12 months. After rising last year, the number of open cases has been reducing over recent months as more cases are being closed than received.

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

Figure 2: Number of cases received, closed and open; May 2022 to April 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.

Note 2: The number of cases received and decided and open include TPOs which were excluded in previous months. The count of open cases excludes TPOs – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

Table 2: Number of cases received, closed and open; May 2022 to April 2023

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

Note 2: The number of cases received and decided and open include TPOs which were excluded in previous months. The count of open cases excludes TPOs – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Received	2,015	1,754	1,744	1,678	1,777	1,832	1,881	1,600	1,676	1,568	1,914	1,450	20,889
Closed	1,634	1,384	1,611	1,679	1,433	1,670	1,811	1,732	1,706	1,798	1,887	1,452	19,797
Open	13,493	13,874	13,971	13,960	14,234	14,434	14,451	14,338	14,325	14,050	14,075	14,031	

Source: Horizon and Picaso

## Number of Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate has made 17,410 appeal decisions<sup>3</sup> in the last 12 months. There were 1,308 cases decided in April 2023.

Table 3 below shows the monthly breakdown with fewer decisions for the months of June and September 2022 and April 2023.

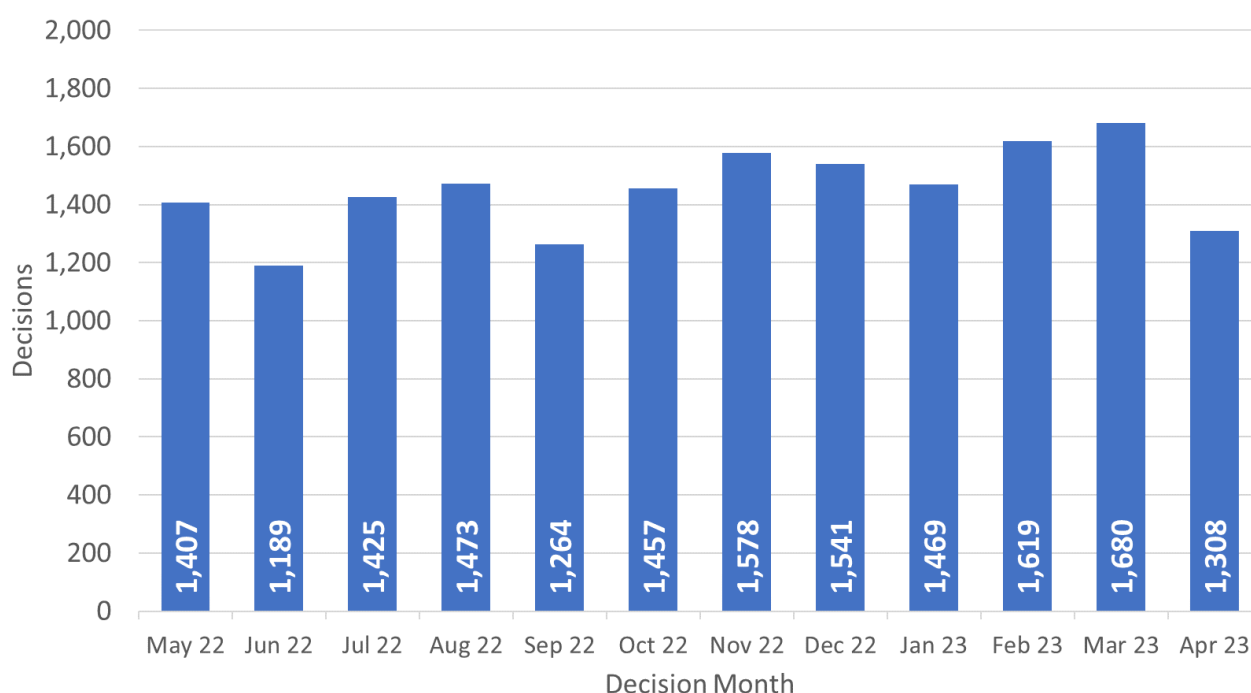
Table 3: Appeal Decisions; May 2022 to April 2023

Note 1: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Decisions	1,407	1,189	1,425	1,473	1,264	1,457	1,578	1,541	1,469	1,619	1,680	1,308	17,410

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Figure 3 – Appeal Decisions; May 2022 to April 2023



Note 1: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

Source: Horizon and Picaso

### Decisions by procedure and case type

Planning Inspectors work on a broader range of work than the appeals featured in this release. For example, they also work on examining Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project applications, Local Plans<sup>4</sup>, Compulsory Purchase Order applications and many other specialist licencing/ application types.

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

<sup>4</sup> Data on volumes for Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects and Local Plans can be seen here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-statistics> (Tables 1.1 and 1.2)

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

The large majority of decisions (15,997) were made on written representations. This is 92% of all appeal decisions made. Table 4 shows that written representation decisions have varied from around 1,100 to over 1,500 per month over the past 12 months. There were 1,225 decisions in April 2023.

There were 889 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, the monthly average being 74. During April 2023 55 decisions were issued. In April 2023 28 decisions were made for inquiries. Decisions for inquiries since May 2022 have ranged between 24 and 80.

Table 4: Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; May 2022 to April 2023

Note 1: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Written Representations	1,284	1,101	1,337	1,354	1,171	1,373	1,457	1,339	1,329	1,497	1,530	1,225	15,997
Hearings	89	54	62	39	69	53	89	156	64	76	83	55	889
Inquiries	34	34	26	80	24	31	32	46	76	46	67	28	524
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>1,189</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>1,264</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>1,578</b>	<b>1,541</b>	<b>1,469</b>	<b>1,619</b>	<b>1,680</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>17,410</b>

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Planning	1,140	999	1,171	1,156	1,014	1,259	1,336	1,289	1,225	1,399	1,393	1,114	14,495
Enforcement	215	138	166	224	184	142	174	192	184	170	238	140	2,167
Specialist	52	52	88	93	66	56	68	60	60	50	49	54	748
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>1,189</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>1,264</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>1,578</b>	<b>1,541</b>	<b>1,469</b>	<b>1,619</b>	<b>1,680</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>17,410</b>

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.

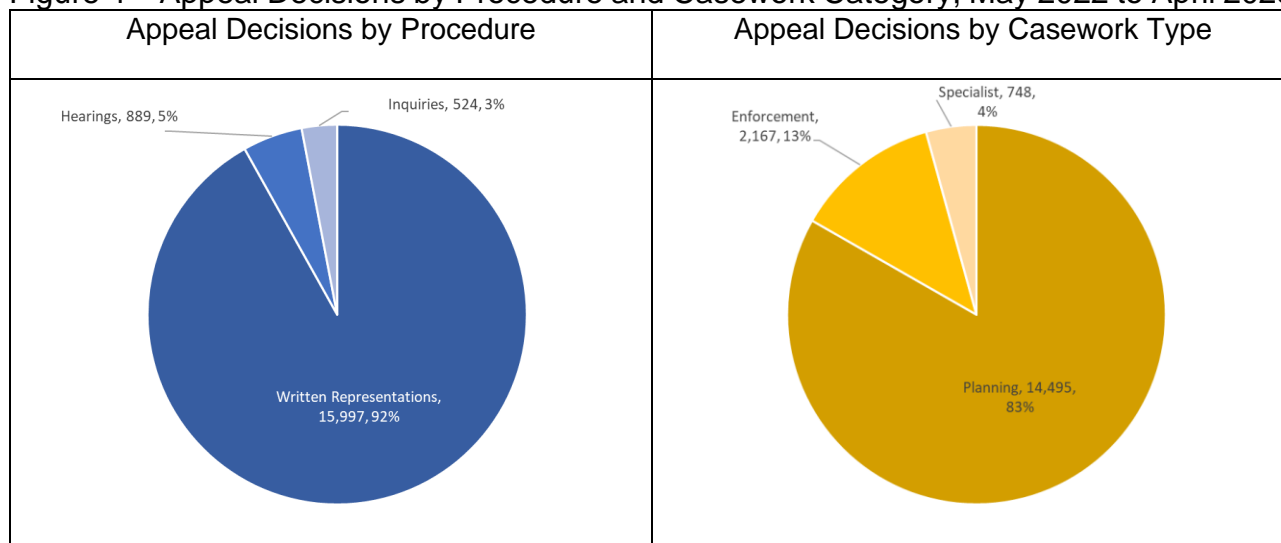
**What are Specialist cases?** Specialist casework includes Common Land, Rights of Way orders (including Schedule 14 cases), Purchase orders, Tree Preservation Orders (excluding receipts and open cases), High Hedges appeals, Hedgerow appeals, Wayleave, Compulsory Purchase Orders, Secretary of State, 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 (14,495). This is about 83% of all appeal decisions made. There were 2,167 enforcement decisions and 748 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 181. Specialist casework

figures continue to vary each month, from a high of 93 in August 2022 to a low of 49 in March 2023.

Figure 4 – Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; May 2022 to April 2023



Note 1: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

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 29 weeks; and 29 weeks for April 2023. Figure 5 shows the median has been between 25 and 31 weeks for each of the last 12 months.

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 35 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.



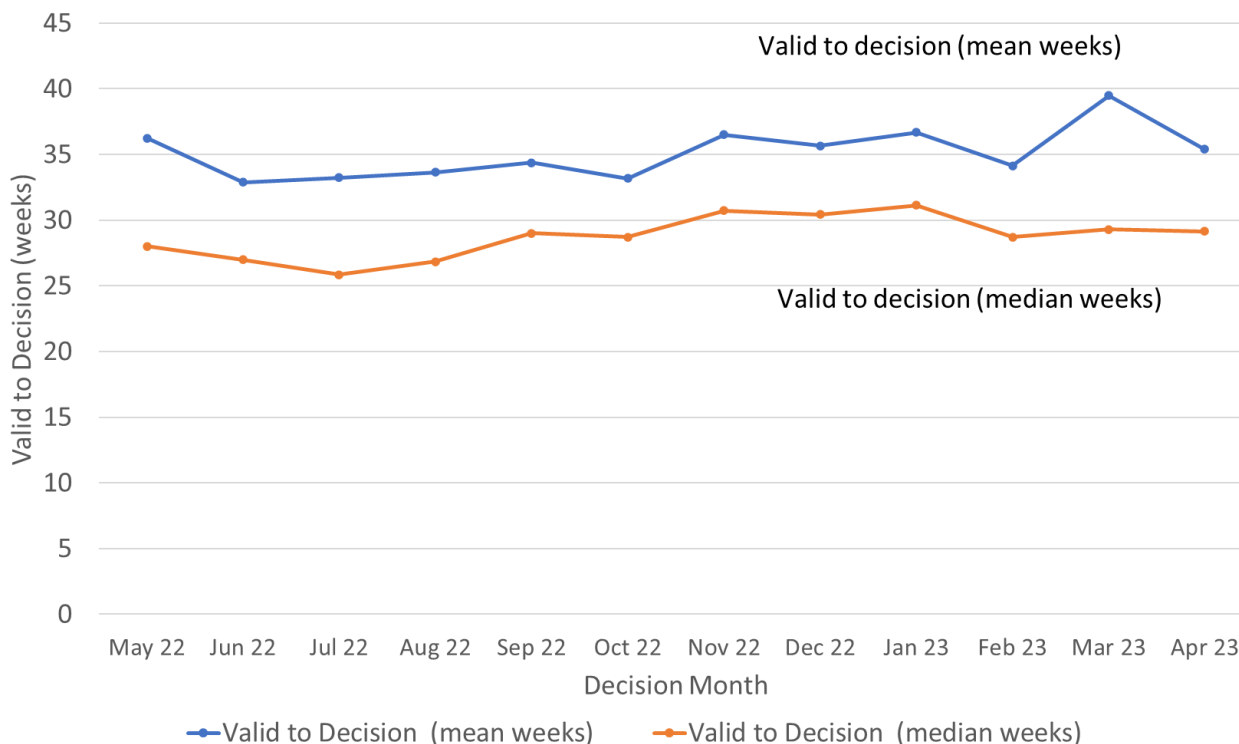
What are mean, median, and standard deviation?	
Measure	Definition
Mean	The total time taken divided by the number of cases. Also referred to as the 'average'. A measure of how long each case would take, if the total time taken was spread evenly across all cases.
Median	This is the time taken by the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

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	28.0	27.0	25.9	26.9	29.0	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	28.7	29.3	29.1	28.7
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	36.3	32.9	33.2	33.6	34.4	33.2	36.5	35.7	36.7	34.1	39.5	35.4	35.2
Standard Deviation (weeks)	31.2	25.0	27.0	23.2	22.8	19.8	22.4	22.1	24.1	22.6	35.1	22.4	25.3

Source: Horizon and Picaso

Figure 5: Median and mean Time to Decision; May 2022 to April 2023



Source: Horizon and Picaso

## Procedure Type

Table 6 below shows decision timeliness broken down by the procedure type. Hearings and inquiries take longer than written representations<sup>5</sup>, both types take roughly 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 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 April 2023 is 28 weeks. The median time for hearings over the 12 months to April 2023 is 55 weeks. The median time to decide for hearings over the 12 months to April 2023 was 53 weeks.

**Table 6: Mean and Median Time to Decision, with Standard Deviation, by Procedure; May 2022 to April 2023**

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

Note 2: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

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

Measure	Procedure	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	WR	26.9	26.1	25.1	26.0	28.4	28.4	30.1	29.0	29.7	27.7	28.1	28.6	27.7
	HRG	94.0	61.0	58.2	63.0	41.1	40.9	51.0	54.4	60.0	43.9	48.0	36.9	54.7
	INQ	48.6	39.6	29.6	68.6	36.5	29.6	41.1	38.6	74.4	58.0	204.6	79.1	52.6
	All	28.0	27.0	25.9	26.9	29.0	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	28.7	29.3	29.1	28.7
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	WR	30.4	29.7	30.3	30.6	32.8	32.5	34.8	32.7	33.3	31.9	34.1	33.7	32.3
	HRG	112.3	86.7	85.3	67.8	51.4	45.1	56.5	58.8	62.0	53.6	58.5	49.5	65.7
	INQ	58.6	51.3	58.6	67.6	62.3	44.3	58.4	42.1	73.6	76.0	139.2	79.6	72.5
	All	36.3	32.9	33.2	33.6	34.4	33.2	36.5	35.7	36.7	34.1	39.5	35.4	35.2
Standard Deviation (weeks)	WR	18.4	17.0	20.8	19.1	20.1	18.6	19.7	18.1	18.1	17.5	20.6	20.0	19.1
	HRG	59.8	61.7	55.6	43.1	31.5	24.8	34.7	35.6	31.3	38.6	42.1	30.1	46.1
	INQ	36.9	35.4	53.7	30.6	54.9	40.8	43.4	18.3	50.6	54.6	89.0	40.7	57.8
	All	31.2	25.0	27.0	23.2	22.8	19.8	22.4	22.1	24.1	22.6	35.1	22.4	25.3
Decisions	WR	1,284	1,101	1,337	1,354	1,171	1,373	1,457	1,339	1,329	1,497	1,530	1,225	15,997
	HRG	89	54	62	39	69	53	89	156	64	76	83	55	889
	INQ	34	34	26	80	24	31	32	46	76	46	67	28	524
	All	1,407	1,189	1,425	1,473	1,264	1,457	1,578	1,541	1,469	1,619	1,680	1,308	17,410

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.

<sup>5</sup> Written representations includes Rights of Way Schedule 14 appeals

## 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 specialist<sup>6</sup> cases, as does Figure 6.

The median time to decision for planning cases (there are many more of these decisions than in the other categories) is lower than for 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 each of the last twelve months.

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

Casework Category	Measure	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Planning Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	27.0	26.0	25.0	25.1	27.0	27.4	29.1	28.9	28.3	26.1	26.1	26.9	26.9
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	30.3	29.3	29.1	28.7	30.8	30.6	33.0	31.4	31.5	30.7	31.5	32.2	30.8
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	21.6	17.8	20.4	17.7	18.2	15.9	17.6	16.0	16.3	17.8	18.6	20.0	18.2
Enforcement Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	56.1	40.9	42.2	58.6	44.7	44.1	52.1	62.5	63.4	53.3	67.6	57.9	55.4
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	66.6	56.3	56.8	56.1	51.1	50.5	59.6	62.0	67.9	59.1	85.8	60.0	62.0
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	50.0	47.0	40.9	29.6	29.3	26.7	32.3	31.6	36.6	35.3	62.0	26.6	40.9
Specialist Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	28.4	31.6	24.9	30.6	29.4	34.6	34.2	26.9	36.7	35.4	26.1	36.8	31.6
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	41.6	40.1	44.5	41.3	43.2	47.0	47.9	43.6	46.0	45.9	41.8	37.9	43.4
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	34.7	24.9	41.2	30.4	37.5	39.8	34.7	33.7	32.7	29.2	38.3	17.5	33.9

Source: Horizon and Picaso.

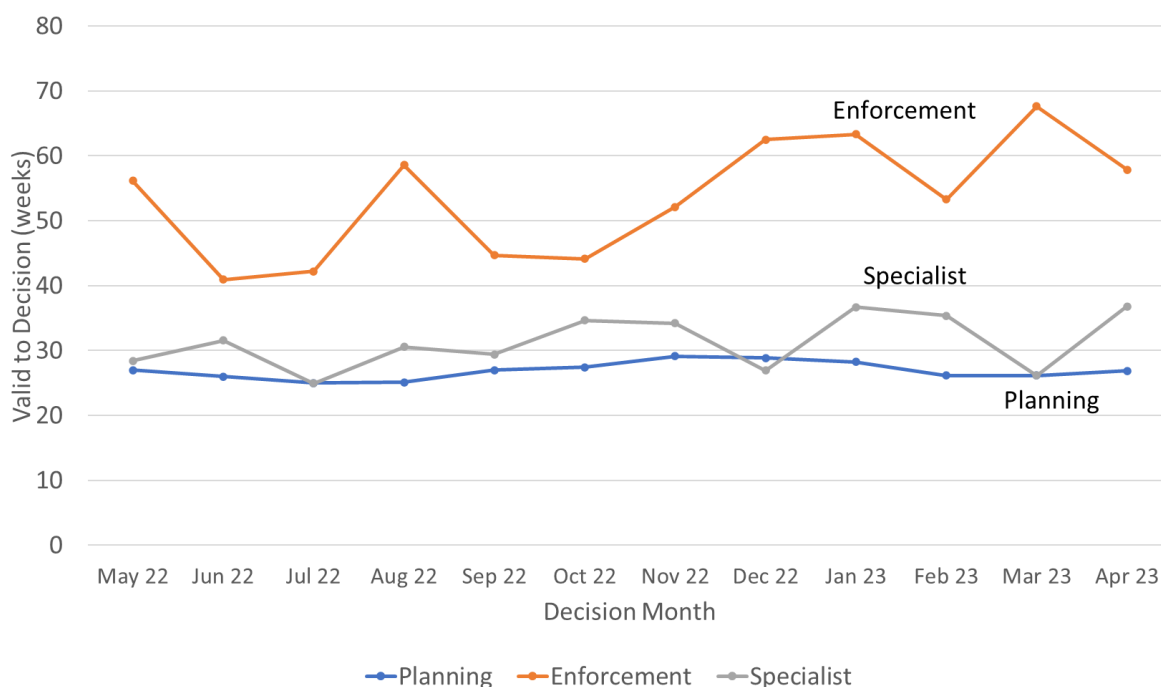
Annex A gives information on median and mean time to decision, with standard deviation, for the three procedure types, split by planning, enforcement, and specialist casework categories.

Enforcement decisions made in the past 12 months had a median decision time of 55 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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: May 2022 to April 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 B<sup>7</sup> for further details.

### Planning Inquiry Decisions

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

The median time for inquiries under Rosewell process over the 12 months to April 2023 is 30 weeks and the median time to decision for April 2023 was 25 weeks.

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

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

Measure	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Decisions	23	21	13	18	11	22	19	38	22	15	18	9	229
Median (weeks)	33.6	31.0	23.3	26.0	28.6	25.9	29.4	38.6	28.6	31.7	29.4	24.9	29.9
Mean (weeks)	42.2	33.0	23.9	30.9	29.5	29.1	38.0	36.9	31.0	40.2	33.5	34.9	34.2
St. Dev. (weeks)	19.4	9.8	4.6	14.0	9.4	11.0	20.8	6.5	10.3	29.2	13.4	20.2	15.5

Most inquiry decisions now being issued are under the revised ‘Rosewell’<sup>8</sup> 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; May 2022 to April 2023

Note 1: Number of decisions for September is affected by decisions being recorded after statistics downloaded.

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

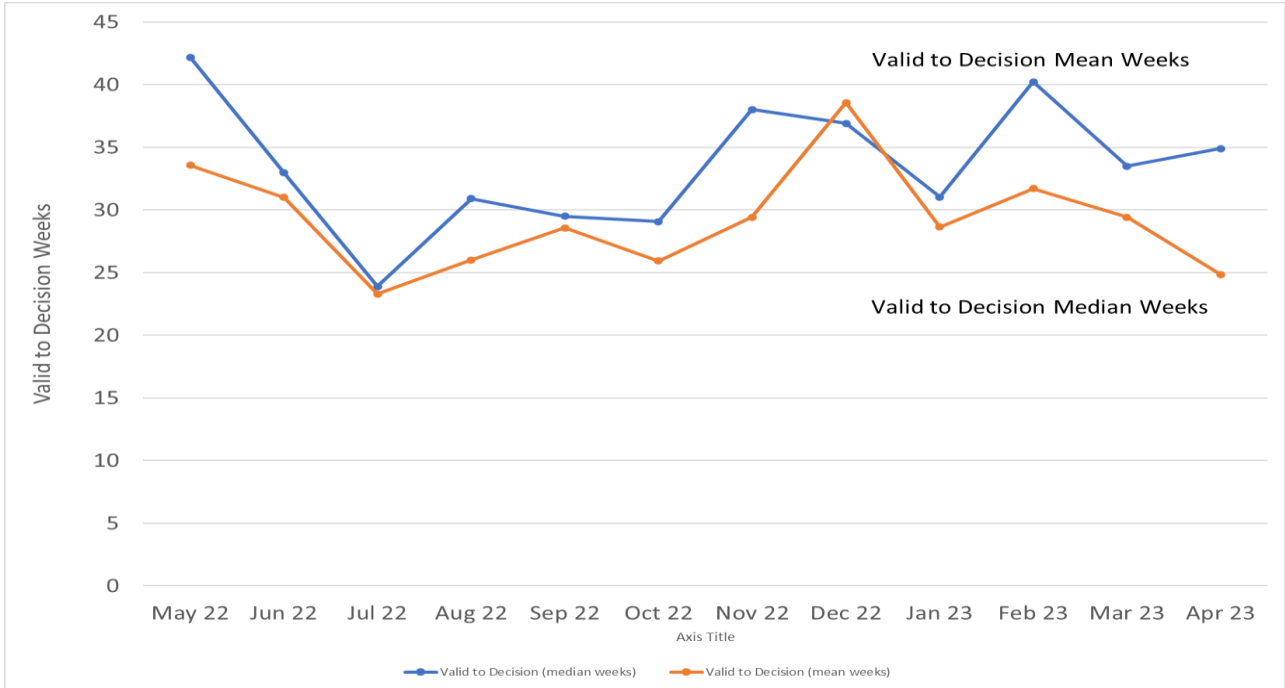
<sup>8</sup> The ‘Rosewell’ process introduced changes to how the inquiry event date was agreed and a firm timetable for submission of documentation. Further information on what the Rosewell Review concluded is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-planning-appeal-inquiries-report>

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Decisions	1	1	2	3	0	1	1	1	3	5	3	3	24

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; May 2022 to April 2023



Source: Horizon

## Open Cases

At the end of April 2023, the Planning Inspectorate had 14,031 cases open<sup>910</sup>; the number of open cases peaked at 14,455 in November 2022. 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 12,582 cases being handled through written representations; 763 through hearings; and 639 through inquiries, as well as 47 not currently allocated a procedure type. 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.

<sup>9</sup> The number of open cases exclude some Tree Preservation Order cases — see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

<sup>10</sup> Open cases are any that have been received but on which a decision has not yet been made/ issued. Cases included comprise Planning, Enforcement, and 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 April 2023

Stage	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	Total
Cases received but yet to be deemed valid	2,148	38	5	2,191
Cases deemed valid but yet to 'start'	2,737	129	122	3,020
Case started but event (site visit/hearing/inquiry) has not yet happened	7,657	562	487	8,718
Event has happened/started but decision not yet issued	40	34	25	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,582</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>14,031</b>

Source: Horizon

Note 1 - there are 47 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.

Note 3: The number of open cases excludes some TPOs – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

## Inspectors

Table 11 below shows the number of inspectors in the Planning Inspectorate in each month from May 2022 to April 2023<sup>11</sup>. This includes headcount (i.e. the number of different individuals) and full-time equivalents (FTE) where those working part time are counted in proportion with their contracted hours. There were 419 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in April 2023 – with a full-time equivalent of 376.

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

Month	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Headcount	365	371	378	376	388	391	390	390	406	409	421	419
FTE	325.9	331.5	337.7	335.0	346.2	348.9	348.3	348.3	363.2	365.3	377.4	375.5

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

<sup>11</sup> Data as at the last day of the month.

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.

Please note also the issue about TPO cases addressed at the top of this report – this means there is some provisional data which will be revised in line with the published revisions procedure.

## 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 July, September 2022 and February and April 2023 for inquiries decisions.

Procedure	Measure	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	1,073	940	1,110	1,108	956	1,195	1,253	1,168	1,161	1,325	1,312	1,063	13,664
	Median Average Weeks	26.3	25.4	24.4	24.9	26.9	27.4	29.0	28.0	28.1	26.0	25.9	26.7	26.6
	Mean Average Weeks	27.5	27.7	26.9	27.9	30.1	30.3	32.3	30.3	30.9	29.9	30.6	31.5	29.7
	Standard Deviation	13.7	14.5	13.9	15.7	17.2	15.6	16.4	14.3	15.3	15.9	17.0	18.7	15.8
Hearings	Decisions	43	37	46	27	47	41	63	82	39	54	60	39	578
	Median Average Weeks	61.4	51.1	55.9	42.6	38.3	32.0	39.0	34.5	44.7	25.4	41.6	27.0	41.7
	Mean Average Weeks	90.0	66.4	81.2	55.4	45.8	39.7	44.8	43.1	48.5	41.8	48.2	42.7	52.6
	Standard Deviation	58.4	41.6	55.3	43.0	30.5	23.1	30.1	29.6	27.5	31.6	32.8	30.6	39.8
Inquires	Decisions	24	22	15	21	11	23	20	39	25	20	21	12	253
	Median Average Weeks	33.9	31.1	24.0	26.0	28.6	25.9	29.4	38.6	29.7	32.5	31.1	28.8	30.6
	Mean Average Weeks	46.0	34.6	29.4	37.5	29.5	28.5	41.2	38.6	35.6	55.5	42.0	56.6	39.4
	Standard Deviation	26.4	12.0	14.8	27.2	9.4	11.1	24.6	12.4	19.2	41.4	30.9	43.9	25.4
All Planning Cases	Decisions	1,140	999	1,171	1,156	1,014	1,259	1,336	1,289	1,225	1,399	1,393	1,114	14,495
	Median Average Weeks	27.0	26.0	25.0	25.1	27.0	27.4	29.1	28.9	28.3	26.1	26.1	26.9	26.9
	Mean Average Weeks	30.3	29.3	29.1	28.7	30.8	30.6	33.0	31.4	31.5	30.7	31.5	32.2	30.8
	Standard Deviation	21.6	17.8	20.4	17.7	18.2	15.9	17.6	16.0	16.3	17.8	18.6	20.0	18.2



## 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 May and November 2022 decisions and April 2023 and all months for inquiry decisions other than August 2022 and January, February and March 2023.

Procedure	Measure	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	165	119	153	164	159	128	145	118	122	131	176	114	1,694
	Median Average Weeks	45.7	37.3	39.6	40.0	44.4	39.7	49.3	53.8	53.5	47.7	58.1	53.1	47.4
	Mean Average Weeks	47.6	43.1	53.0	46.3	48.1	49.0	54.1	54.1	56.7	50.4	60.7	53.6	51.4
	Standard Deviation	28.6	24.2	36.3	25.3	23.4	26.9	28.5	27.8	23.6	20.5	24.8	22.0	26.9
Hearings	Decisions	43	11	10	6	14	11	20	71	15	17	21	12	251
	Median Average Weeks	170.3	223.7	75.0	99.6	39.7	53.7	93.0	68.1	74.7	73.6	69.3	69.9	72.7
	Mean Average Weeks	136.5	165.3	107.1	101.1	57.5	64.6	85.5	75.2	80.8	87.9	84.1	70.5	92.6
	Standard Deviation	52.8	70.8	64.4	25.4	30.0	22.2	19.6	33.1	22.3	40.8	50.1	17.8	49.6
Inquires	Decisions	7	8	3	54	11	3	9	3	47	22	41	14	222
	Median Average Weeks	78.0	96.1	52.7	68.6	62.3	67.6	58.6	45.1	82.0	72.6	224.3	114.2	82.0
	Mean Average Weeks	86.7	103.3	81.7	80.9	85.9	61.2	89.2	63.4	92.9	89.0	194.1	103.3	107.7
	Standard Deviation	37.2	35.9	43.7	22.2	62.5	12.2	57.6	28.7	51.4	61.9	62.9	23.2	63.5
All Enforcement Cases	Decisions	215	138	166	224	184	142	174	192	184	170	238	140	2,167
	Median Average Weeks	56.1	40.9	42.2	58.6	44.7	44.1	52.1	62.5	63.4	53.3	67.6	57.9	55.4
	Mean Average Weeks	66.6	56.3	56.8	56.1	51.1	50.5	59.6	62.0	67.9	59.1	85.8	60.0	62.0
	Standard Deviation	50.0	47.0	40.9	29.6	29.3	26.7	32.3	31.6	36.6	35.3	62.0	26.6	40.9

## Specialist

Note 1: 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: The number of cases decided include TPOs which were excluded in previous months – see the start of this document and the Background Quality report for more information

Procedure	Measure	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	46	42	74	82	56	50	59	53	46	41	42	48	639
	Median Average Weeks	24.4	26.4	23.1	27.5	25.9	33.7	31.3	26.9	30.8	31.4	24.1	34.8	28.1
	Mean Average Weeks	35.1	36.1	35.0	37.2	36.3	41.0	41.9	38.7	33.5	37.8	32.5	36.1	36.8
	Standard Deviation	28.3	24.6	30.3	27.6	33.2	30.6	29.5	29.8	20.4	20.9	22.9	16.5	27.2
Hearings	Decisions	3	6	6	6	8	1	6	3	10	5	2	4	60
	Median Average Weeks	90.9	71.4	76.4	82.6	67.5	50.4	60.6	85.1	88.5	60.0	99.1	42.6	72.7
	Mean Average Weeks	85.7	68.0	80.7	90.5	73.5	50.4	83.6	101.4	86.6	64.1	99.1	52.6	78.9
	Standard Deviation	29.0	12.0	24.4	28.4	27.5	0.0	45.5	33.5	27.1	24.5	55.9	23.2	32.2
Inquires	Decisions	3	4	8	5	2	5	3	4	4	4	5	2	49
	Median Average Weeks	80.9	43.9	133.2	35.6	112.9	126.7	91.1	48.1	73.8	111.6	92.7	51.9	70.0
	Mean Average Weeks	94.1	39.1	104.7	50.4	112.9	106.9	80.0	60.0	85.0	106.1	97.1	51.9	84.1
	Standard Deviation	47.2	13.6	65.7	22.5	51.2	66.6	27.6	31.1	41.7	26.3	60.5	3.0	52.5
All Specialist Cases	Decisions	52	52	88	93	66	56	68	60	60	50	49	54	748
	Median Average Weeks	28.4	31.6	24.9	30.6	29.4	34.6	34.2	26.9	36.7	35.4	26.1	36.8	31.6
	Mean Average Weeks	41.6	40.1	44.5	41.3	43.2	47.0	47.9	43.6	46.0	45.9	41.8	37.9	43.4
	Standard Deviation	34.7	24.9	41.2	30.4	37.5	39.8	34.7	33.7	32.7	29.2	38.3	17.5	33.9

## Annex B – Detailed Information on timeliness (April 2023)

The information below is published today on the number and length of decisions made in April 2023<sup>12</sup>:

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

Casework Type	Procedure Type	Median (weeks)	Mean (weeks)	Decisions
s78 planning appeals	Written Representations	32.9	37.7	568
	Hearings	26.4	42.2	38
	Inquiries	28.8	56.6	12
Householder appeals	Written Representations	17.1	22.4	427
Enforcement appeals	Written Representations	53.1	53.6	114
	Hearings	69.9	70.5	12
	Inquiries	114.2	103.3	14

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	
<b>Weeks between valid date &amp; start date</b>				
Median (average)	14.3	3.5	3.1	4.6
Mean (average)	15.4	5.4	3.3	7.1
Cases that started in April 2023	681	36	22	266
<b>Weeks between start date &amp; event date</b>				
Median (average)	11.0	12.0	14.6	8.0
Mean (average)	16.1	20.4	15.1	10.3
Cases where an event occurred during April 2023	577	33	12	342
<b>Weeks between event date &amp; decision date</b>				
Median (average)	5.3	4.8	9.9	3.6
Mean (average)	6.6	8.1	25.0	4.0
Cases that have been decided in April 2023	515	36	10	422

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.

### 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
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<sup>12</sup> Also published on gov.uk here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeals-average-timescales-for-arranging-inquiries-and-hearings>

	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: January 2023. Decisions: February and March 2023
Table 2	Received: May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December 2022 and January, February, March 2023.  Closed: May, July, August, September, October, November, December 2023 and January, February, March 2023.  Open cases: February and March 2023.
Table 3	Decisions: February and March 2023.
Table 4	Decisions: Written Representations February and March 2023.  Decisions: Specialist Casework February and March 2023.
Table 6	Valid to Decision Median weeks Hearings: February and March 2023  Valid to Decision Median weeks Inquiries: May 2022.  Valid to Decision Mean weeks Hearings: March 2023.  Valid to Decision Mean weeks Inquiries: May 2022.  Standard Deviation Hearings: March 2023.
Table 7	Valid to Decision Median Weeks Specialist Casework: June, November 2022 and February 2023.  Valid to Decision Mean weeks Specialist Casework: June, November and December 2022 and February 2023.  Standard Deviation Specialist Casework: June, December 2022 and February and March 2023.
Table 8	Valid to Decision Median Weeks May 2022.

	Valid to Decision Mean Weeks May 2022
Annex A	<p>Mean Average Weeks Planning Inquiries: May 2022.</p> <p>Median Average week Specialist Casework Written Representations: June, November, December 2022 and February and March 2023.</p> <p>Mean Average weeks Specialist Casework Written Representations: June, November, December 2022 and February and March 2023.</p> <p>Standard Deviation Specialist Casework Written Representations: June, December 2022 and February and March 2023.</p> <p>Median Average Weeks Specialist Casework Hearings: February and March 2023.</p> <p>Mean Average Weeks Specialist Casework Hearings: February and March 2023.</p> <p>Standard Deviation Specialist Casework Hearings: February and March 2023.</p>

## 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.
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 appellants.
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>
Inquiries	<p>An inquiry is usually used for complex cases where legal issues may need to be considered. The main parties will usually have legal representatives to present their case and to cross-examine any witnesses. Prior to the inquiry date, the Planning Inspectorate will expect to have received various documents from all parties that will be taking part in the appeal. These may include statements of case and proofs of evidence from expert witnesses. Third parties may also take part. The inquiry will be led by the inspector and will follow a formal procedure.</p> <p>At some point during or on conclusion of the inquiry the inspector and the main parties will undertake a site visit.</p> <p>Source: Planning Portal</p>

Term	Explanation
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](mailto:press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

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

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