



The Planning Inspectorate

Official Statistics
19th October 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.

This statistical bulletin provides:

- Appeals decisions and events held from October 2022 to September 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 and 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 September was 31 weeks.

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

Procedure type	Last 12 months	September 2023
Written Representations	30 weeks	31 weeks
Hearings	44 weeks	33 weeks
Inquiries	51 weeks	62 weeks
All Cases	31 weeks	31 weeks

The median time for planning cases was 30 weeks in September 2023. The 12 month median being 29 weeks.

Enforcement decisions made in September 2023 had a median decision time of 50 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 September 2023 is 30 weeks.

Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate made 18,221 appeal decisions¹ in the last 12 months, an average of 1,518 per month. The number of decisions in September 2023 was 1,624.

There were 1,517 written representations decisions in September 2023 and 16,795 in the last 12 months.

There were 916 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, and during September 2023, 60 decisions were issued.

There were 510 decisions made on inquiries during the last 12 months, with 47 in September 2023.

Planning Inspectors

There were 431 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate at the end of September 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

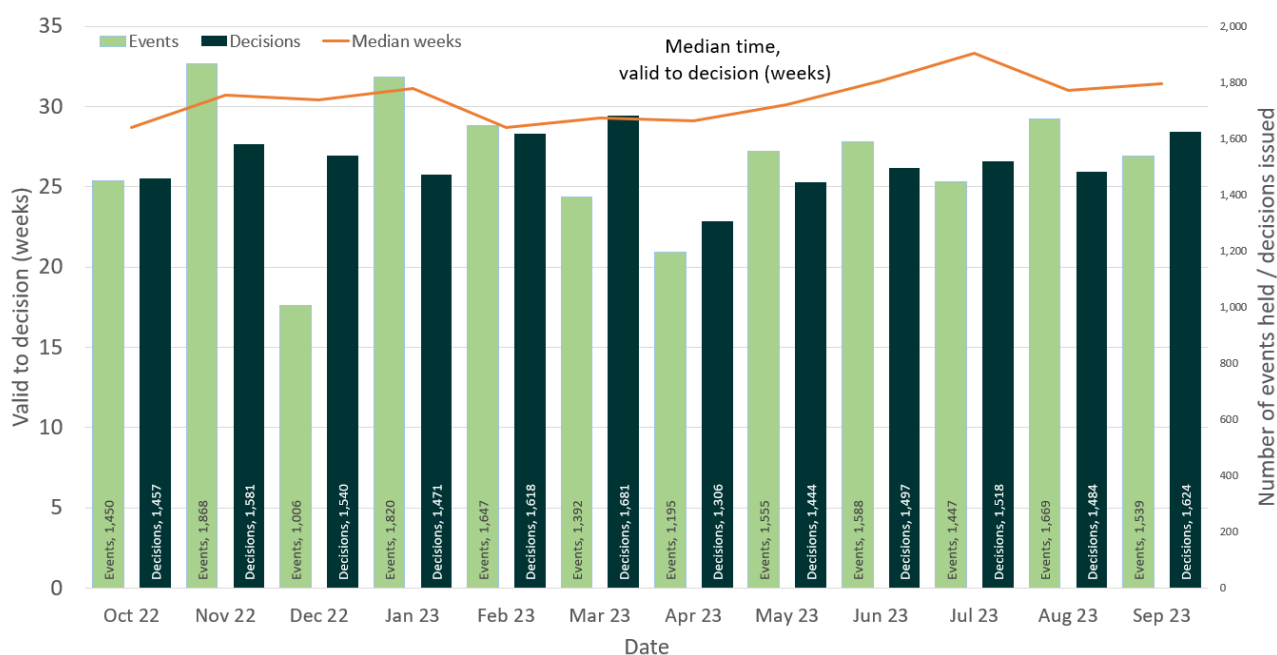
The number of decisions issued in September 2023 was 1,624, with a monthly average of 1,518 over the past 12 months.

The number of events recorded for September 2023 was 1,539, the average over the past 12 months was 1,515. The way that events are counted has changed this month and this is described in the Coherence and Comparability section of the Background Quality Report.

The median valid to decision time was 31 weeks in September 2023, as seen in Figure 1 and Table 1 below. The median valid to decision time has risen slightly (0.4 weeks higher than August).

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 for December and April.

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



Source: Horizon

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

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

Month	Oct- 22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Events Held	1,450	1,868	1,006	1,820	1,647	1,392	1,195	1,555	1,588	1,447	1,669	1,539	18,176
Decisions	1,457	1,581	1,540	1,471	1,618	1,681	1,306	1,444	1,497	1,518	1,484	1,624	18,221
Median	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	28.7	29.3	29.1	30.1	31.6	33.3	31.0	31.4	30.6

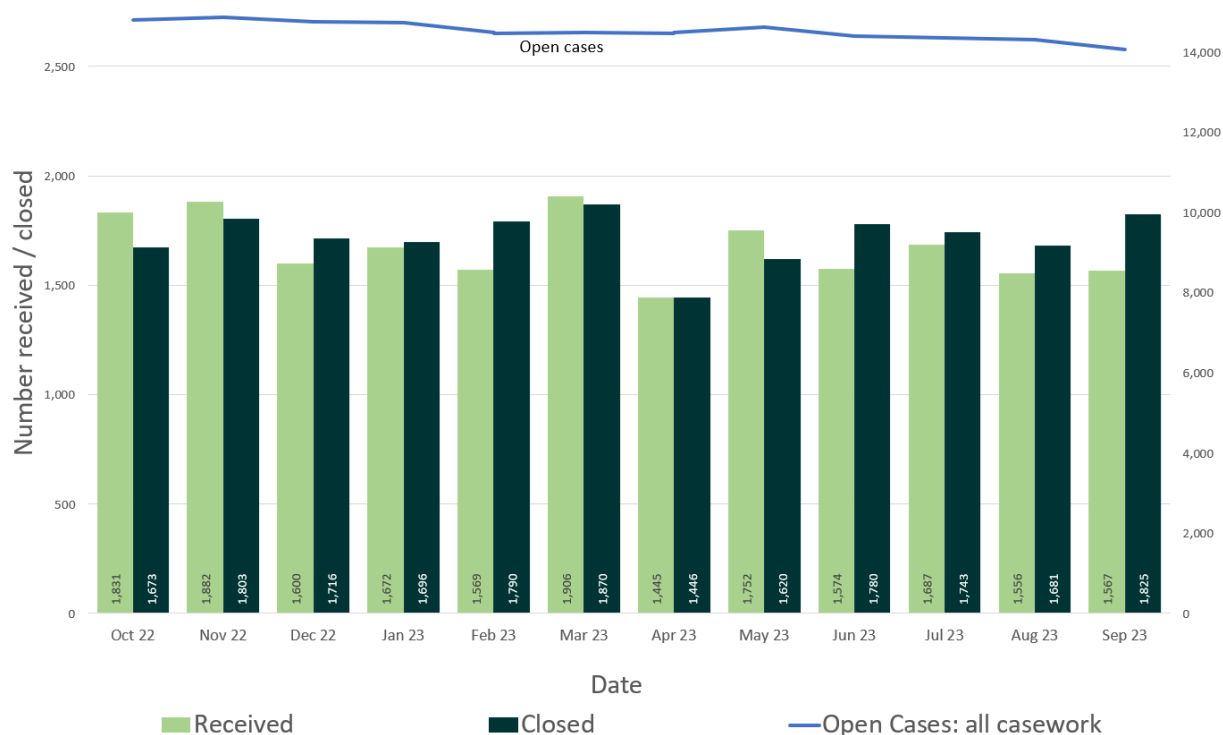
Source: Horizon

Figure 2 below shows the number of cases received, closed and open for each of the last 12 months.

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; October 2022 to September 2023.



Source: Horizon

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; October 2022 to September 2023.

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

Month	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Received	1,831	1,882	1,600	1,672	1,569	1,906	1,445	1,752	1,574	1,687	1,556	1,567	20,041
Closed	1,673	1,803	1,716	1,696	1,790	1,870	1,446	1,620	1,780	1,743	1,681	1,825	20,643
Open	14,792	14,858	14,746	14,734	14,490	14,495	14,486	14,607	14,403	14,357	14,297	14,052	

Source: Horizon

Number of Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate has made 18,221 appeal decisions³ in the last 12 months. There were 1,624 cases decided in September 2023.

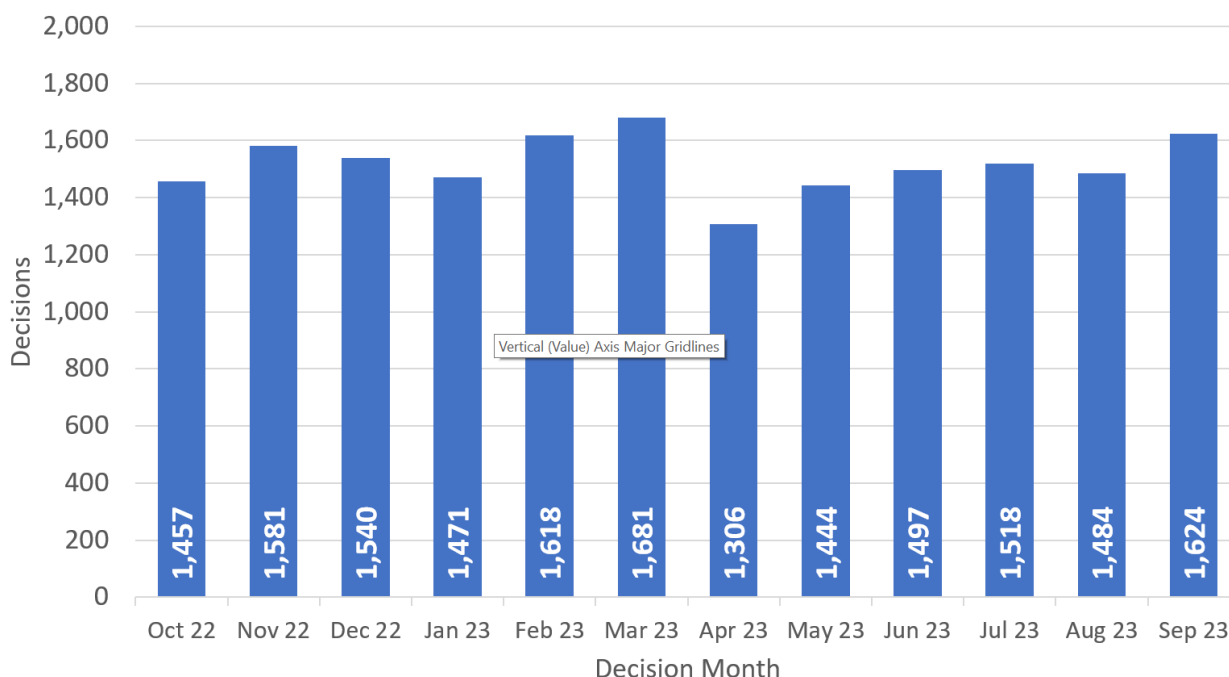
Table 3 below shows the monthly breakdown with fewer decisions for the month of April 2023 and the past month being among the highest.

Table 3: Appeal Decisions; October 2022 to September 2023.

Month	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Decisions	1,457	1,581	1,540	1,471	1,618	1,681	1,306	1,444	1,497	1,518	1,484	1,624	18,221

Source: Horizon

Figure 3 – Appeal Decisions; October 2022 to September 2023.



Source: Horizon

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 over the past 12 months (16,795) were made on written representations. This is 92% of all appeal decisions made. Table 4 shows that written

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)

representation decisions have varied from around 1,221 to over 1,500 per month over the past 12 months. There were 1,517 decisions in September 2023.

There were 916 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, the monthly average being 76. During September 2023 60 decisions were issued. In September 2023 47 decisions were made for inquiries. Decisions for inquiries since October 2022 have ranged between 28 and 79.

Table 4: Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; October 2022 to September 2023.

Month	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Written Representations	1,373	1,459	1,337	1,328	1,495	1,530	1,221	1,314	1,409	1,418	1,394	1,517	16,795
Hearings	53	90	156	64	77	83	57	90	59	65	62	60	916
Inquiries	31	32	47	79	46	68	28	40	29	35	28	47	510
Total	1,457	1,581	1,540	1,471	1,618	1,681	1,306	1,444	1,497	1,518	1,484	1,624	18,221
Month	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Planning	1,259	1,336	1,289	1,228	1,397	1,391	1,111	1,195	1,262	1,260	1,262	1,342	15,332
Enforcement	142	174	192	184	169	237	138	150	174	207	194	227	2,188
Specialist	56	71	59	59	52	53	57	99	61	51	28	55	701
Total	1,457	1,581	1,540	1,471	1,618	1,681	1,306	1,444	1,497	1,518	1,484	1,624	18,221

Source: Horizon

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.

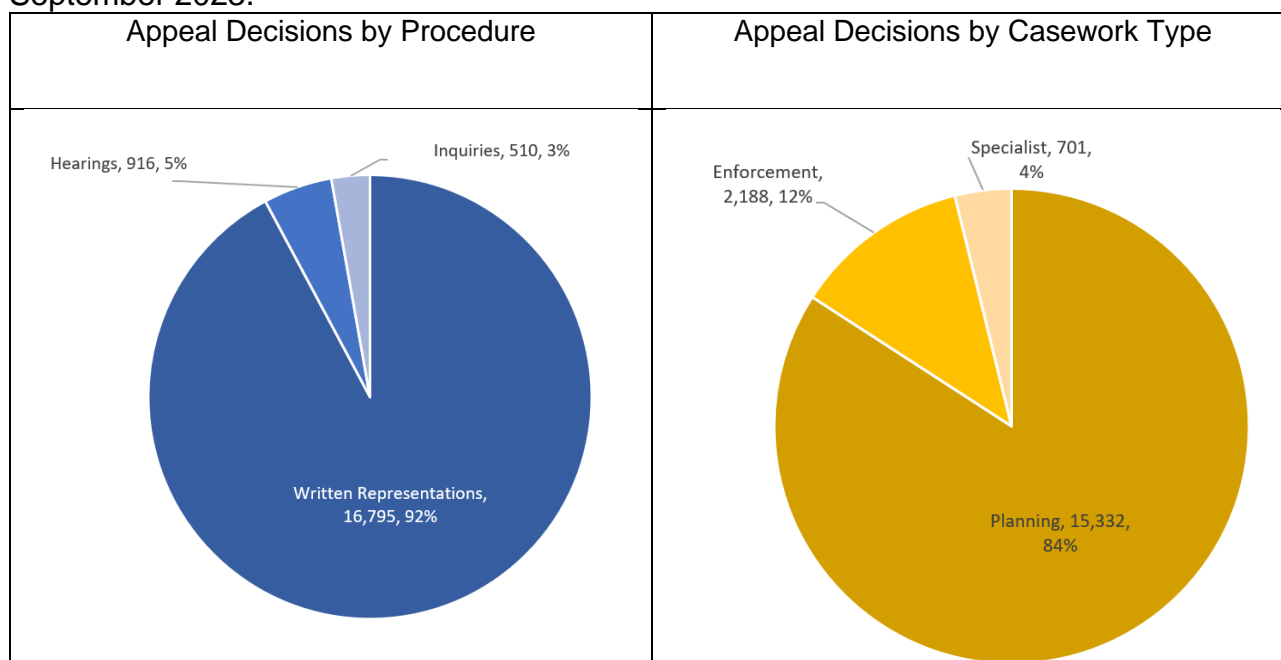
What are Enforcement cases? Enforcement covers enforcement appeals (i.e., appeals against the issue of an enforcement notice served by a local planning authority for alleged breaches of planning control), enforcement listed building notice appeals and lawful development certificate appeals.

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 (15,332). This is about 84% of all appeal decisions made. There were 2,188 enforcement decisions and 701 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 182. Specialist casework figures continue to vary each month, from a high of 99 in May 2023 to a low of 28 in August 2023.

Figure 4 – Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; October 2022 to September 2023.



Source: Horizon

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 31 weeks; and 31 weeks for September 2023. Figure 5 shows the median has been between 29 and 33 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 36 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.

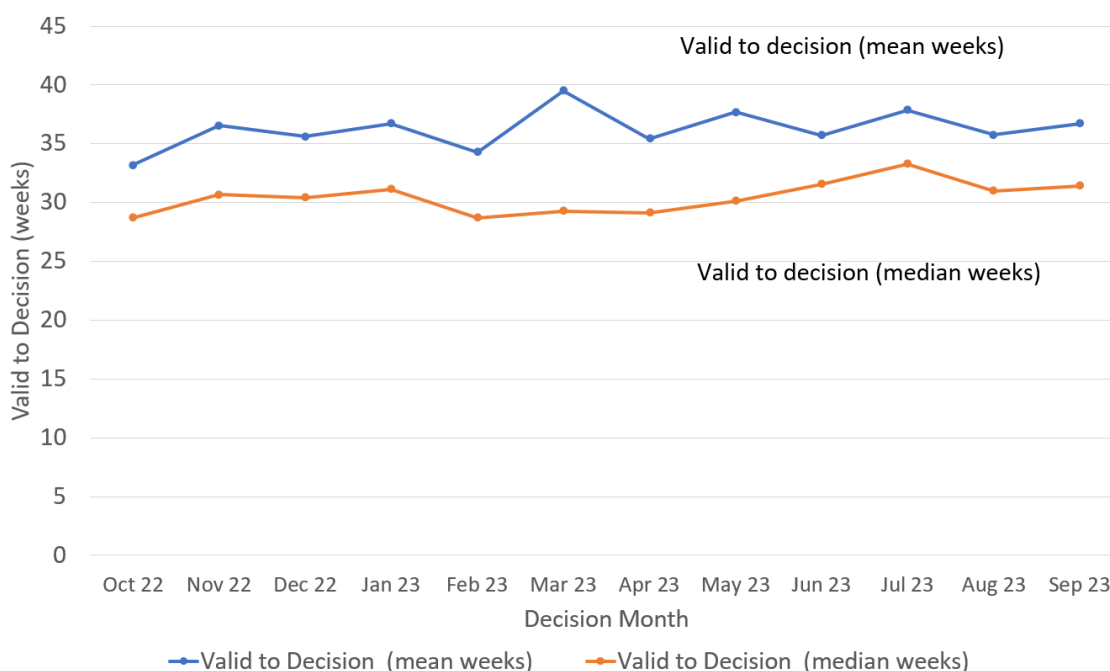
What are mean, median, and standard deviation?	
Measure	Definition
Mean	The total time taken divided by the number of cases. Also referred to as the 'average'. A measure of how long each case would take, if the total time taken was spread evenly across all cases.
Median	This is the time taken by the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

Month	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	28.7	29.3	29.1	30.1	31.6	33.3	31.0	31.4	30.6
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	33.2	36.5	35.6	36.7	34.2	39.5	35.4	37.7	35.7	37.9	35.8	36.7	36.3
Standard Deviation (weeks)	19.8	22.4	21.9	24.1	22.8	35.1	22.5	27.4	20.4	21.8	20.8	21.5	23.9

Source: Horizon

Figure 5: Median and mean Time to Decision; October 2022 to September 2023.



Source: Horizon

Procedure Type

Table 6 below shows decision timeliness broken down by the procedure type. Hearings and inquiries have taken longer than written representations⁵, but for the past four months written representations and hearings have had similar median decision times. 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 September 2023 is 30 weeks. The median time for hearings over the 12 months to September 2023 is 44 weeks. The median time to decide for inquiries over the 12 months to September 2023 was 51 weeks.

Table 6: Mean and Median Time to Decision, with Standard Deviation, by Procedure; October 2022 to September 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	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	WR	28.4	30.1	29.0	29.7	27.7	28.1	28.6	29.9	31.4	33.1	31.0	31.3	30.0
	HRG	40.9	51.1	54.4	60.0	45.0	48.0	37.6	56.8	33.7	30.4	29.1	33.1	44.4
	INQ	29.6	41.1	38.6	73.3	58.0	179.6	79.1	38.4	33.7	42.7	28.0	61.9	50.6
	All	28.7	30.7	30.4	31.1	28.7	29.3	29.1	30.1	31.6	33.3	31.0	31.4	30.6
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	WR	32.5	34.8	32.7	33.3	32.0	34.1	33.7	34.4	35.0	36.8	34.8	35.4	34.1
	HRG	45.1	56.7	58.7	62.0	53.6	58.5	50.7	70.7	44.3	51.2	49.2	48.6	55.4
	INQ	44.3	58.4	42.4	72.8	76.0	137.8	79.6	71.2	56.2	55.9	54.6	63.0	72.6
	All	33.2	36.5	35.6	36.7	34.2	39.5	35.4	37.7	35.7	37.9	35.8	36.7	36.3
Standard Deviation (weeks)	WR	18.6	19.7	17.9	18.1	17.8	20.7	20.0	20.3	19.0	20.0	18.1	19.5	19.2
	HRG	24.8	34.5	35.7	31.3	38.3	42.1	30.2	53.0	29.1	37.1	40.4	37.5	38.2
	INQ	40.8	43.4	18.2	49.8	54.6	89.1	40.7	57.2	40.1	35.2	48.0	32.7	59.1
	All	19.8	22.4	21.9	24.1	22.8	35.1	22.5	27.4	20.4	21.8	20.8	21.5	23.9
Decisions	WR	1373	1459	1337	1328	1495	1530	1221	1314	1409	1418	1394	1517	16795
	HRG	53	90	156	64	77	83	57	90	59	65	62	60	916
	INQ	31	32	47	79	46	68	28	40	29	35	28	47	510
	All	1457	1581	1540	1471	1618	1681	1306	1444	1497	1518	1484	1624	18221

Source: Horizon

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.

⁵ 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 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 26 weeks and above for each of the last twelve months.

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

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

Casework Category	Measure	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Planning Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	27.4	29.1	28.9	28.3	26.1	26.0	26.7	28.7	29.9	31.6	29.0	29.9	28.6
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	30.6	33.0	31.4	31.6	30.7	31.5	32.1	33.4	32.5	34.9	32.7	33.4	32.3
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	15.9	17.6	16.0	16.3	17.8	18.6	20.0	22.3	17.5	19.8	17.4	18.9	18.3
Enforcement Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	44.1	52.1	62.5	63.4	54.1	67.7	57.9	58.4	53.1	53.3	49.9	50.0	55.0
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	50.5	59.6	62.0	67.9	60.1	86.0	60.5	68.9	55.9	53.5	54.4	55.1	61.7
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	26.7	32.3	31.6	36.6	36.1	62.0	26.4	40.9	21.1	22.3	26.5	24.7	36.2
Specialist Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	34.6	34.7	26.9	36.9	38.2	28.7	37.6	35.1	32.9	40.1	28.1	33.7	34.6
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	47.0	47.9	41.8	46.2	45.9	42.3	39.7	42.6	44.6	47.2	44.4	42.3	44.3
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	39.8	34.3	31.3	32.9	28.6	37.9	19.2	26.4	33.8	35.2	39.3	28.3	32.2

Source: Horizon

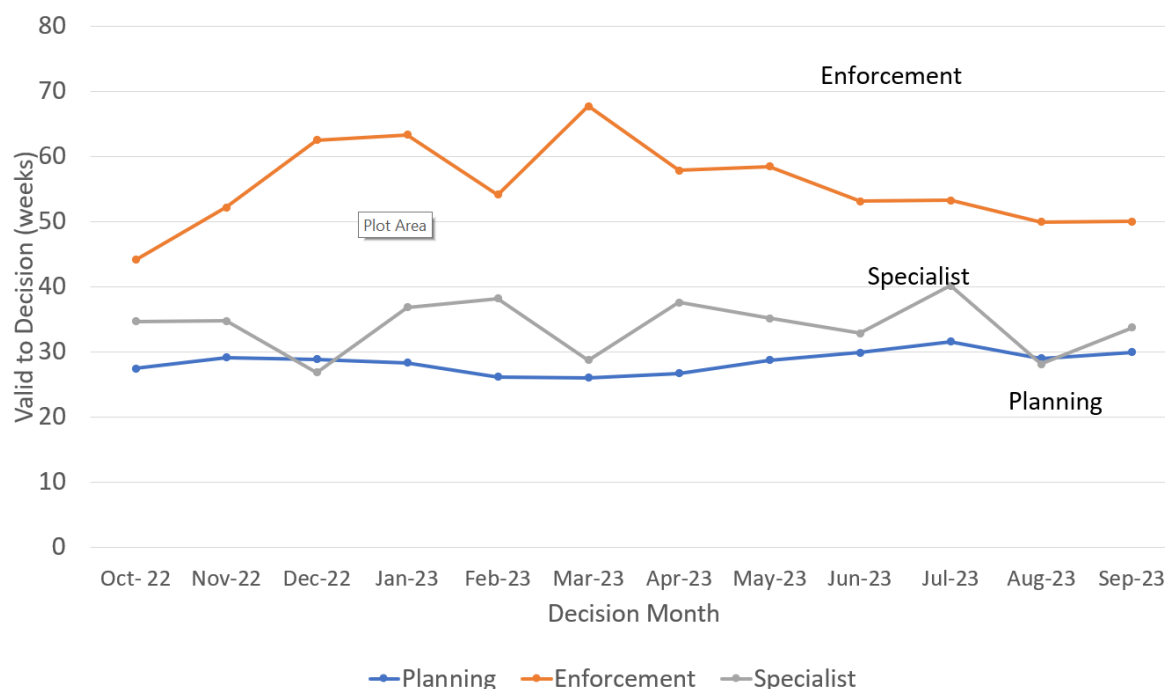
Annex A gives information on median and mean time to decision, with standard deviation, for the three procedure types, split by planning, enforcement, and specialist casework categories.

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.

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: October 2022 to September 2023.



Source: Horizon

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 September 2023 is 30 weeks and the median time to decision for September 2023 was 62 weeks. This increase is due to 2 separate groups of linked appeals (24 appeals in total) being decided in September outside of their target each due to very specific circumstances. We anticipate the median average time for October will return to around previous levels

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

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

Measure	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Decisions	22	19	39	25	15	18	9	20	17	16	21	32	253
Median (weeks)	25.9	29.4	38.6	30.0	31.7	29.4	24.9	28.6	30.0	26.3	25.3	61.9	30.4
Mean (weeks)	29.1	38.0	37.4	33.5	40.2	33.5	34.9	30.5	34.3	30.6	33.5	47.1	35.8
St. Dev. (weeks)	11.0	20.8	7.0	11.7	29.2	13.4	20.2	8.9	25.8	12.0	16.8	16.2	16.9

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.

The median average time for Rosewell inquiries is showing an increase for September. This is due to 2 separate groups of older linked appeals (24 appeals in total) being decided in September.

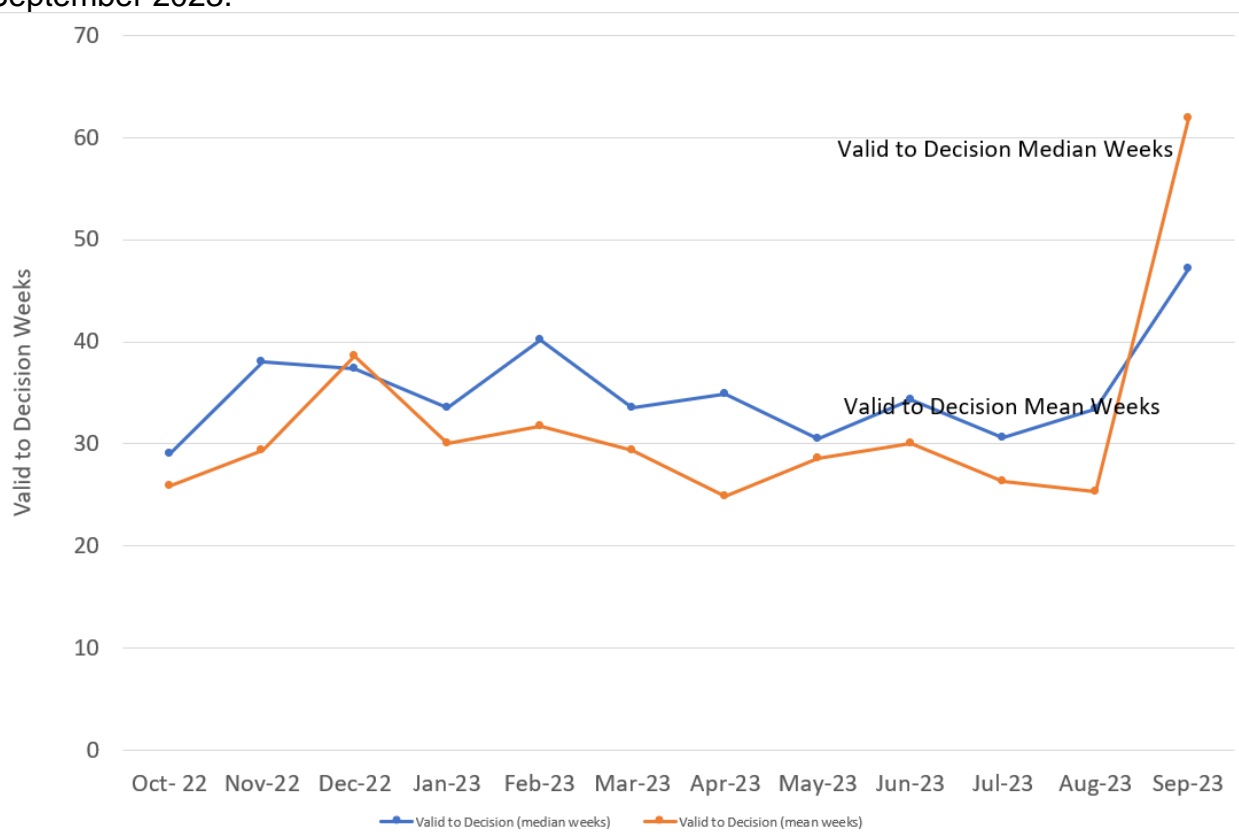
Table 9: Decisions, Planning Inquiry Cases under non-Rosewell Process; October 2022 to September 2023.

Month	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Decisions	1	1	1	3	5	3	3	0	0	2	0	1	20

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; October 2022 to September 2023.



Source: Horizon

Open Cases

At the end of September 2023, the Planning Inspectorate had 14,052 cases open. 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.

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>

The open cases comprised of 12,646 cases being handled through written representations; 764 through hearings; and 595 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.

We have identified an error in the data that is used to count the number of started cases that have had an event, and the number that have not. While we rectify this, we have combined these two stages of the process in Table 10 below. We believe this error has been present since a new administrative system was introduced for recording events, in April 2022. To address this error, we have included amended copies of all of the affected previously published tables in the accompanying Excel file.

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

Stage	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	Total
Cases received but yet to be deemed valid	2,882	24	3	2,911
Cases deemed valid but yet to 'start'	2,387	128	97	2,654
Case started but decision not yet issued	7,377	612	495	8,487
Total	12,646	764	595	14,052

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.

Inspectors

Table 11 below shows the number of inspectors in the Planning Inspectorate in each month from October 2022 to September 2023⁹. 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 431 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in August 2023 – with a full-time equivalent of 387.

Table 11: Planning Inspectors – Headcount and FTE; October 2022 to September 2023. (at end of month)

Month	Oct- 22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Headcount	391	390	390	406	409	421	419	420	426	437	435	431

⁹ Data as at the last day of the month.

FTE	348.9	348.3	348.3	363.2	365.3	377.4	375.5	376.8	381.9	392.4	391.4	387.3
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Source: SAP HR

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

Quarterly Statistics

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

Appeals against refusal of Planning Permission (Section 78 appeals)

The largest volume of casework dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate are appeals against refusal of Planning Permission, which are made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The analysis below deals with just this casework type although figures for other casework types can be found in the published quarterly statistics.

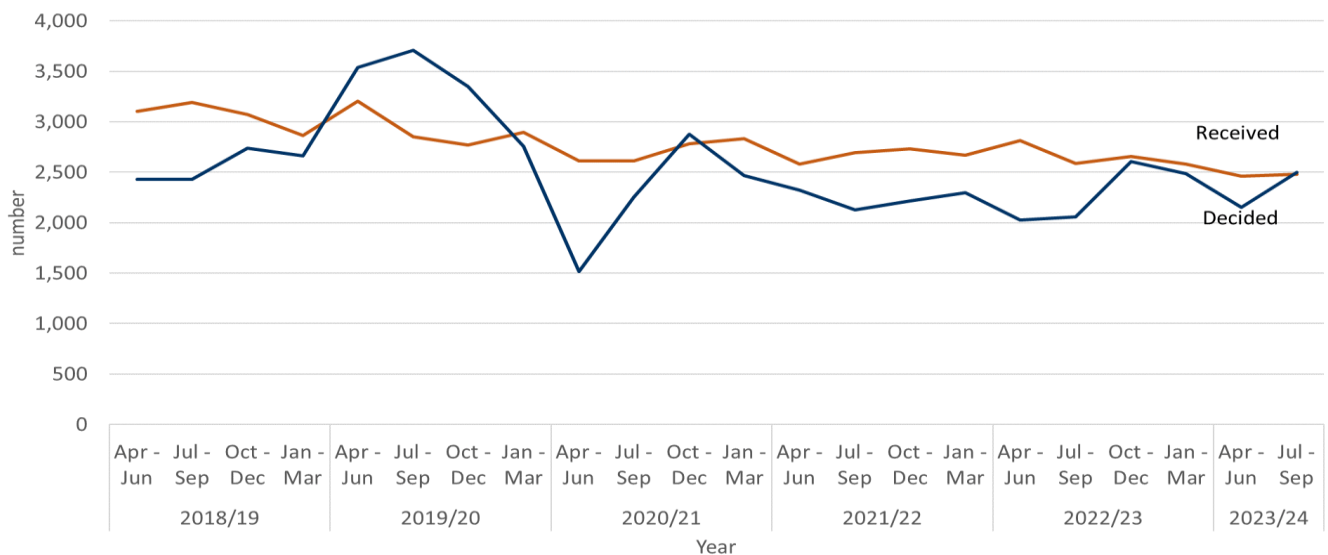
Number of appeals received compared to decisions issued.

In the last twelve months, October 2022 to September 2023, there have been 10,176 Section 78 planning appeals (s78) received, 5.5% lower than for the period October 2021 to September 2022.

In the last five financial years (April 2018 to September 2023) the highest level of quarterly receipts (3,203) occurred in April to June 2019 and the highest number of decisions (3,705) was in July to September 2019. Over the past year the average number of receipts per quarter was 2,544 and the average number of decisions per quarter was 2,437.

The number of appeals received in July to September 2023 (2,477) was 4.1% lower than the same period in 2022. Appeal receipts since the pandemic started average 2,649 per quarter (April 20 to June 23). During 2019, the last 4 quarters before the pandemic, the Inspectorate received an average of 2,929 appeals per quarter.

Figure 8: Number of s78 Planning appeal, receipts and decisions, 2018/19 to 2023/24, by quarter



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

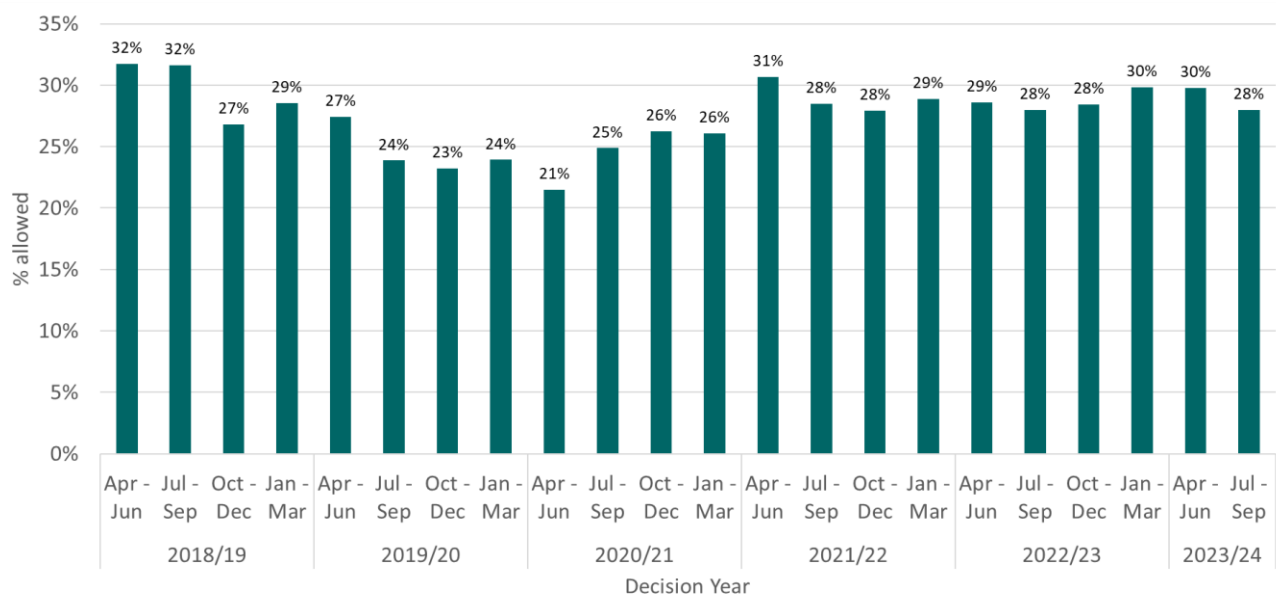
The number of decisions issued in July to September 2023, was 16.1% higher than the previous quarter and 21.6% more than the corresponding quarter last year.

Appeals Allowed

The percentage of Section 78 planning appeals that were allowed in the latest quarter was 28%, a fall from 30% in the previous quarter (see figure 9) There were 700 appeals allowed between July and September 2023, 59 less than in the previous quarter.(see Figure 11).

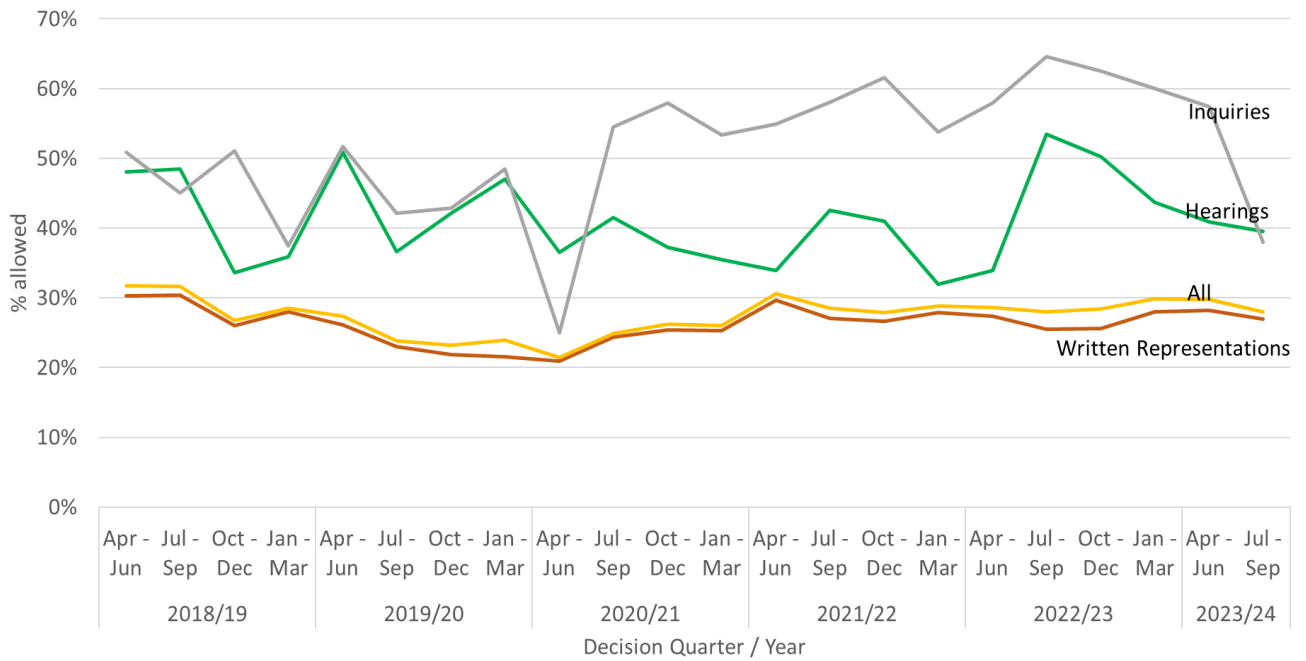
The consistency in the overall percentage allowed is heavily influenced by the number of written representations appeals allowed, as this procedure type contributes by far the greatest number of decisions each year. There has been slightly more variation in the percentage allowed for hearings and inquiries. See Figure 10 below for further details.

Figure 9: S78 planning appeals, percentage allowed, 2018/19 to 2023/24, by quarter



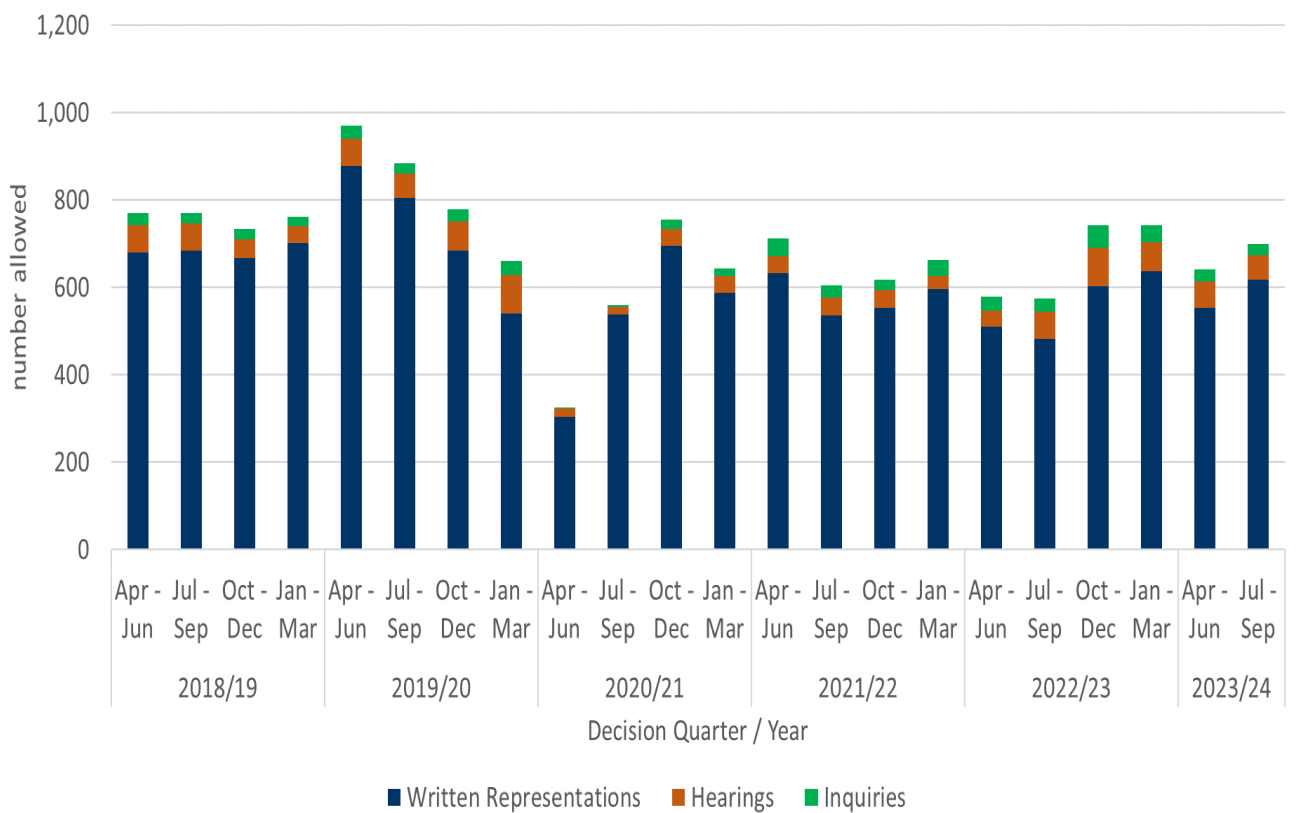
Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.4 s78 planning appeals decided. See Annex C Table B, for full data table

Figure 10: S78 planning appeals, percentage allowed by procedure type, 2018/19 to 2023/24, by quarter



Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.4 s78 planning appeals decided. See Annex C Table B, for full data table

Figure 11: S78 planning appeals, number of appeals allowed, 2018/19 to 2023/24, by quarter



Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.4 s78 planning appeals decided. See Annex C, Table C, for full data table

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, June and July 2023 for inquiries decisions.

Procedure	Measure	Oct- 22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	1,195	1,253	1,167	1,161	1,323	1,310	1,060	1,113	1,193	1,192	1,191	1,266	14,424
	Median Average Weeks	27.4	29.0	28.0	28.1	26.0	25.9	26.6	28.6	29.9	31.9	29.1	29.7	28.4
	Mean Average Weeks	30.3	32.3	30.3	30.9	29.8	30.6	31.5	31.9	32.0	34.3	32.2	32.7	31.6
	Standard Deviation	15.6	16.4	14.3	15.3	15.9	17.0	18.7	18.2	16.5	18.1	15.7	17.7	16.7
Hearings	Decisions	41	63	82	39	54	60	39	62	52	50	50	43	635
	Median Average Weeks	32.0	39.0	34.3	44.7	25.4	41.6	27.0	40.2	31.5	25.6	26.3	25.1	31.0
	Mean Average Weeks	39.7	44.8	42.9	48.5	41.9	48.2	42.7	61.4	42.9	50.2	43.4	40.1	45.8
	Standard Deviation	23.1	30.1	29.6	27.5	31.5	32.8	30.6	52.9	29.5	40.3	39.3	34.1	35.1
Inquires	Decisions	23	20	40	28	20	21	12	20	17	18	21	33	273
	Median Average Weeks	25.9	29.4	38.6	30.0	32.5	31.1	28.8	28.6	30.0	28.6	25.3	61.9	31.1
	Mean Average Weeks	28.5	41.2	39.0	37.3	55.5	42.0	56.6	30.5	34.3	36.3	33.5	50.2	40.2
	Standard Deviation	11.1	24.6	12.5	18.8	41.4	30.9	43.9	8.9	25.8	19.9	16.8	23.7	25.1
All Planning Cases	Decisions	1,259	1,336	1,289	1,228	1,397	1,391	1,111	1,195	1,262	1,260	1,262	1,342	15,332
	Median Average Weeks	27.4	29.1	28.9	28.3	26.1	26.0	26.7	28.7	29.9	31.6	29.0	29.9	28.6
	Mean Average Weeks	30.6	33.0	31.4	31.6	30.7	31.5	32.1	33.4	32.5	34.9	32.7	33.4	32.3
	Standard Deviation	15.9	17.6	16.0	16.3	17.8	18.6	20.0	22.3	17.5	19.8	17.4	18.9	18.3

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

Procedure	Measure	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	128	145	118	122	130	175	112	112	161	184	182	204	1,773
	Median Average Weeks	39.7	49.3	53.8	53.5	48.2	58.1	53.6	56.7	52.9	52.4	48.2	48.2	51.3
	Mean Average Weeks	49.0	54.1	54.1	56.7	51.6	60.9	54.1	56.6	54.1	52.1	51.9	51.0	53.8
	Standard Deviation	26.9	28.5	27.8	23.6	22.6	24.7	21.9	24.5	17.6	21.3	22.4	19.7	23.6
Hearings	Decisions	11	20	71	15	17	21	12	24	6	11	9	13	230
	Median Average Weeks	53.7	93.0	68.1	74.7	73.6	69.3	69.9	78.9	50.5	34.0	58.3	75.3	68.1
	Mean Average Weeks	64.6	85.5	75.2	80.8	87.9	84.1	70.5	96.0	56.6	50.4	74.8	81.9	78.3
	Standard Deviation	22.2	19.6	33.1	22.3	40.8	50.1	17.8	47.9	25.1	24.8	40.6	34.7	36.5
Inquires	Decisions	3	9	3	47	22	41	14	14	7	12	3	10	185
	Median Average Weeks	67.6	58.6	45.1	82.0	72.6	224.3	114.2	149.3	101.3	80.1	146.1	94.6	83.6
	Mean Average Weeks	61.2	89.2	63.4	92.9	89.0	194.1	103.3	120.8	98.2	78.6	146.1	103.0	117.3
	Standard Deviation	12.2	57.6	28.7	51.4	61.9	62.9	23.2	63.3	39.2	19.8	0.0	28.9	67.0
All Enforcement Cases	Decisions	142	174	192	184	169	237	138	150	174	207	194	227	2,188
	Median Average Weeks	44.1	52.1	62.5	63.4	54.1	67.7	57.9	58.4	53.1	53.3	49.9	50.0	55.0
	Mean Average Weeks	50.5	59.6	62.0	67.9	60.1	86.0	60.5	68.9	55.9	53.5	54.4	55.1	61.7
	Standard Deviation	26.7	32.3	31.6	36.6	36.1	62.0	26.4	40.9	21.1	22.3	26.5	24.7	36.2

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	Oct- 22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	50	61	52	45	42	45	49	89	55	42	21	47	598
	Median Average Weeks	33.7	31.3	26.9	30.3	31.9	24.3	35.0	34.1	31.4	35.0	23.4	29.0	31.3
	Mean Average Weeks	41.0	41.7	36.6	33.5	38.0	33.6	36.3	38.3	42.2	42.4	30.7	40.9	38.4
	Standard Deviation	30.6	29.1	26.2	20.6	20.7	24.3	16.4	22.4	33.8	30.9	20.8	28.6	26.3
Hearings	Decisions	1	7	3	10	6	2	6	4	1	4	3	4	51
	Median Average Weeks	50.4	66.3	85.1	88.5	53.9	99.1	65.2	71.5	38.9	63.5	63.9	34.9	66.3
	Mean Average Weeks	50.4	82.0	101.4	86.6	61.3	99.1	63.4	64.4	38.9	66.6	70.2	32.3	71.5
	Standard Deviation	0.0	42.3	33.5	27.1	23.2	55.9	24.3	26.4	0.0	11.3	9.1	6.7	33.2
Inquires	Decisions	5	3	4	4	4	6	2	6	5	5	4	4	52
	Median Average Weeks	126.7	91.1	48.1	73.8	111.6	69.9	51.9	97.5	68.3	42.7	98.9	59.9	65.3
	Mean Average Weeks	106.9	80.0	60.0	85.0	106.1	88.7	51.9	91.3	71.7	71.9	96.8	68.9	83.5
	Standard Deviation	66.6	27.6	31.1	41.7	26.3	58.3	3.0	23.6	23.9	58.4	65.0	21.9	46.6
All Specialist Cases	Decisions	56	71	59	59	52	53	57	99	61	51	28	55	701
	Median Average Weeks	34.6	34.7	26.9	36.9	38.2	28.7	37.6	35.1	32.9	40.1	28.1	33.7	34.6
	Mean Average Weeks	47.0	47.9	41.8	46.2	45.9	42.3	39.7	42.6	44.6	47.2	44.4	42.3	44.3
	Standard Deviation	39.8	34.3	31.3	32.9	28.6	37.9	19.2	26.4	33.8	35.2	39.3	28.3	32.2

Annex B – Detailed Information on timeliness (September 2023)

The information below is published today on the number and length of decisions made in September 2023¹⁰:

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	34.0	38.5	761
	Hearings	25.1	40.9	41
	Inquiries	61.9	50.2	33
Householder appeals	Written Representations	17.4	19.6	398
Enforcement appeals	Written Representations	49.0	51.4	167
	Hearings	78.4	85.1	10
	Inquiries	94.6	101.5	8

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)	14.7	5.0	3.0	8.3
Mean (average)	12.6	7.5	4.0	8.1
Cases that started in September 2023	720	43	19	269
Weeks between start date & event date				
Median (average)	12.7	15.0	17.1	6.5
Mean (average)	15.5	19.0	22.4	9.0
Cases where an event occurred during September 2023	748	47	23	306
Weeks between event date & decision date				
Median (average)	4.6	5.7	9.5	3.4
Mean (average)	6.2	7.4	9.7	4.4
Cases that have been decided in September 2023	732	34	10	393

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.

¹⁰ 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 – Quarterly Tables

Year	Quarter	received	decided
2018/19	Apr - Jun	3,104	2,428
	Jul - Sep	3,192	2,431
	Oct - Dec	3,074	2,739
	Jan - Mar	2,867	2,665
2019/20	Apr - Jun	3,203	3,540
	Jul - Sep	2,849	3,705
	Oct - Dec	2,771	3,350
	Jan - Mar	2,894	2,759
2020/21	Apr - Jun	2,609	1,514
	Jul - Sep	2,613	2,252
	Oct - Dec	2,781	2,879
	Jan - Mar	2,832	2,467
2021/22	Apr - Jun	2,581	2,320
	Jul - Sep	2,692	2,124
	Oct - Dec	2,729	2,212
	Jan - Mar	2,671	2,294
2022/23	Apr - Jun	2,811	2,024
	Jul - Sep	2,584	2,056
	Oct - Dec	2,657	2,606
	Jan - Mar	2,579	2,487
2023/24	Apr - Jun	2,463	2,154
	Jul - Sep	2,477	2,500

Table b: s78 planning appeals, percentage allowed by procedure type, 2018/19 to 2023/24					
Year	Quarter	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	All
2018/19	Apr - Jun	30%	48%	51%	32%
	Jul - Sep	30%	48%	45%	32%
	Oct - Dec	26%	34%	51%	27%
	Jan - Mar	28%	36%	38%	29%
2019/20	Apr - Jun	26%	51%	52%	27%
	Jul - Sep	23%	37%	42%	24%
	Oct - Dec	22%	42%	43%	23%
	Jan - Mar	22%	47%	48%	24%
2020/21	Apr - Jun	21%	37%	25%	21%
	Jul - Sep	24%	41%	55%	25%
	Oct - Dec	25%	37%	58%	26%
	Jan - Mar	25%	35%	53%	26%
2021/22	Apr - Jun	30%	34%	55%	31%
	Jul - Sep	27%	43%	58%	28%
	Oct - Dec	27%	41%	62%	28%
	Jan - Mar	28%	32%	54%	29%
2022/23	Apr - Jun	27%	34%	58%	29%
	Jul - Sep	26%	54%	65%	28%
	Oct - Dec	26%	50%	63%	28%
	Jan - Mar	28%	44%	60%	30%
2023/24	Apr - Jun	28%	41%	57%	30%
	Jul - Sep	27%	40%	38%	28%

Table C: s78 planning appeals, number allowed by procedure type, 2018/19 to 2023/24					
Year	Quarter	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	All
2018/19	Apr - Jun	679	62	29	770
	Jul - Sep	683	63	23	769
	Oct - Dec	666	44	24	734
	Jan - Mar	702	38	21	761
2019/20	Apr - Jun	877	62	31	970
	Jul - Sep	805	55	24	884
	Oct - Dec	684	67	27	778
	Jan - Mar	541	87	32	660
2020/21	Apr - Jun	304	19	2	325
	Jul - Sep	537	17	6	560
	Oct - Dec	695	38	22	755
	Jan - Mar	588	39	16	643
2021/22	Apr - Jun	632	40	39	711
	Jul - Sep	536	40	29	605
	Oct - Dec	553	41	24	618
	Jan - Mar	595	31	36	662
2022/23	Apr - Jun	509	37	33	579
	Jul - Sep	483	61	31	575
	Oct - Dec	602	89	50	741
	Jan - Mar	637	66	39	742
2023/24	Apr - Jun	553	61	27	641
	Jul - Sep	618	55	27	700

Annex D – Revisions to the data tables

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

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

There have been revisions to all previously reported events counts this month (Table 1 and Figure 1), due to a change in the method for counting events. This is described in the Background Quality Report.

Table	Revisions
Table 1	Events held: October, November, December 2022, January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August 2023
Table 2	Received: August 2023
Table 2	Closed: June 2023
Table 2	Open Cases: June, July and August 2023
Table 6	Valid to decision mean weeks: inquiries August 2023

Table 6	Standard deviation: inquiries August 2023
Table 7	Valid to decision Specialist cases median weeks: August 2023
Table 7	Valid to decision Specialist cases mean weeks: August 2023
Table 7	Standard deviation of decision Specialist cases median weeks: August 2023
Annex A	Median weeks: Specialist cases written representations: August 2023
Annex A	Mean weeks: Specialist cases written representations: August 2023
Annex A	Standard deviation: Specialist cases written representations: August 2023
Annex A	Median weeks: Specialist cases Inquiry: August 2023
Annex A	Mean weeks: Specialist cases Inquiry: August 2023
Annex A	Standard deviation: Specialist cases Inquiry: August 2023

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>
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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

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

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