



The Planning Inspectorate

Ministerial Measures - Experimental Statistics 23rd November 2023

Introduction

This report provides information on how the Planning Inspectorate has performed against new measures by which Ministers agreed to assess the organisation's casework performance for appeals.

These measures are:

- A. Appeals valid on first submission
- B. How long appeals take
 - There is also an ambition for more consistent, timely decisions
- C. Customer satisfaction
- D. Number of cases quality assured

Full details of these are available at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1049462/Housing_Minister_letter_to_PINS.pdf

For measure A this report covers the period April 2022 to June 2023. Information on how long appeal decisions take from valid receipt to decision (measure B) covers the 12 months from November 2022 to October 2023, with additional quarterly statistics up to September 2023. For measure C, survey fieldwork was carried out in April and early May 2023. Measure D covers the three months July to September 2023.

This is the sixth time such information has been produced, and work is still in development. Following a review, this series continues with the status of "Experimental", with updates provided every three months. The next publication will be in February 2023.

These statistics are designated as Experimental Statistics and any feedback would be welcome. Please send comments to statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

A. Appeals Valid on First Submission

Ambition: Proportion rising annually and ambition to reach 100%. Rising to at least 85% in 2023/24.

For appeals received during April to June 2023, 55.5% were valid first time¹. Table 1 shows the proportion valid on first submission over the year.

The figures in this time series are revised at each publication as some cases take many months to be validated.

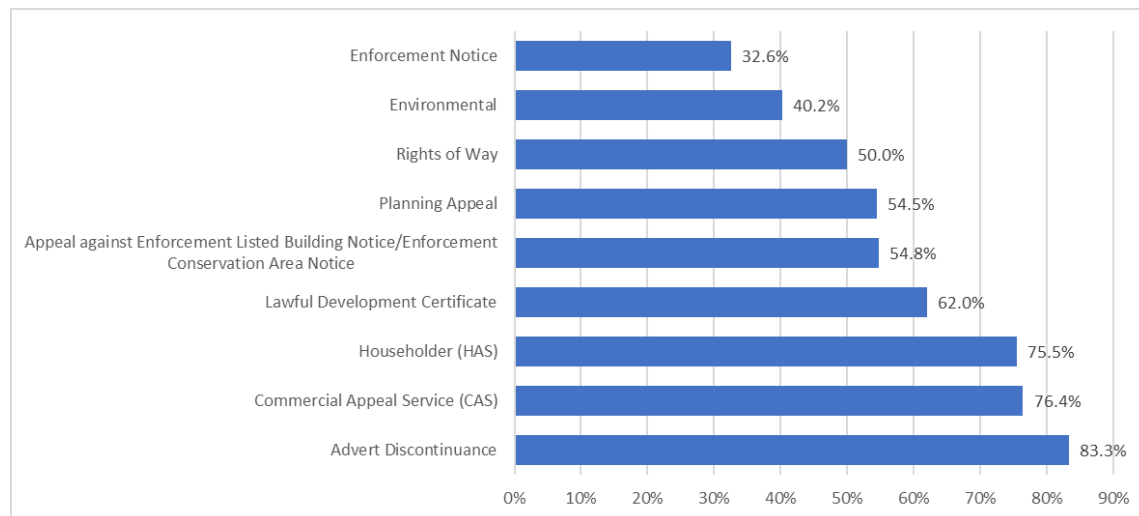
The Inspectorate is developing new digital public services. As more appeals are submitted through those services the proportion of cases submitted validly first time is expected to rise.

Table 1 - Proportion of Appeals Valid on First Submission, By Quarter, for Appeals Received April 2022 to March 2023 (Provisional)

Appeals Received	Apr – Jun 2022	Jul -Sep 2022	Oct – Dec 2022	Jan – Mar 2023	Apr – Jun 2023
% Valid First Time	63.2%	61.2%	62.1%	56.2%	55.5%

Source: Horizon

Figure 1 – Proportion of Appeals Valid on First Submission for Selected Appeal Types, Cases Received July 2022 to June 2023 (Provisional)



Source: Horizon

Robust data on the reasons for appeals not being valid are not currently available. The Inspectorate are developing new digital public services and as more cases are submitted using those services the data we hold will improve.

¹ Please note that this is calculated using a proxy: included are those cases where the date that the appeal had been validly received, is the same as the date that the case was first received. Additionally, be aware that the date for 'validly received' is the date on which the information was received, even if is assessed as being valid on a later date.

B. How Long Appeals Take

Ambition: As an initial milestone in making more consistent, timely decisions - The Planning Inspectorate should be working towards consistently achieving decisions in these ranges:

Appeals decided entirely using writing evidence in 16 – 20 weeks.

Appeals decided including at least some evidence through hearing or inquiry in 24 - 26 weeks (30 weeks to recommendation for called in or recovered cases)

This section provides information on how long it has taken to make decisions in the last 12 months (in this case, November 2022 to October 2023). Complementary statistics for the same period can be found in our monthly Official Statistics publication².

Figure 2 below shows the proportion of cases decided:

- within 20 weeks³;
- within 26 weeks (but more than 20 weeks);
- within 52 weeks (but more than 26 weeks); and
- more than 52 weeks.

The data applies to all cases decided in the year to the end of October 2023, with additional quarterly data up to September 2023; and is broken down by the procedure used to arrive at the decision. The data for this Figure is available at Annex B.

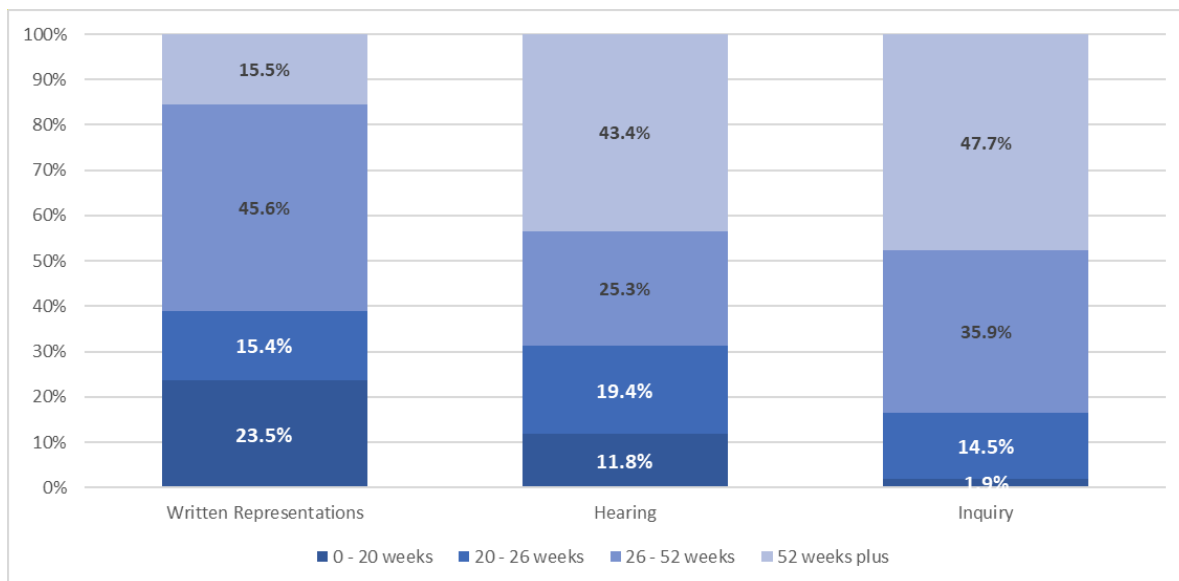
Figure 2 shows how many cases are decided within a year, and how many take longer than a year. It shows that a much smaller proportion (16%) of cases decided by written representations take more than a year than those decided by Hearings (43%) or Inquiries (53%).

It also shows that a greater proportion of cases decided by written representations are decided within 20 weeks (24%) than those decided by Hearings (12%) or Inquiries (2%).

Figure 2: Time for Valid to Decision, for Decisions November 2022 to October 2023

² Please note that these are experimental statistics, with further work required to ensure robust, consistent quality assurance around them. As such they do not have the same status as the Official Statistics measures for the same period.

³ The count of measures “within” a given number weeks, includes cases which took that number of weeks to decide. For example, cases that took 20 weeks are included in the “within 20 weeks” count.



Source: Horizon

Measures set by the Minister that apply to cases decided wholly by written representations are shown in Annex C.

Consultation

If you would like to make a suggestion on which information you would like to see; or would like to have the chance to comment on any proposals on what is published, please contact us via statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

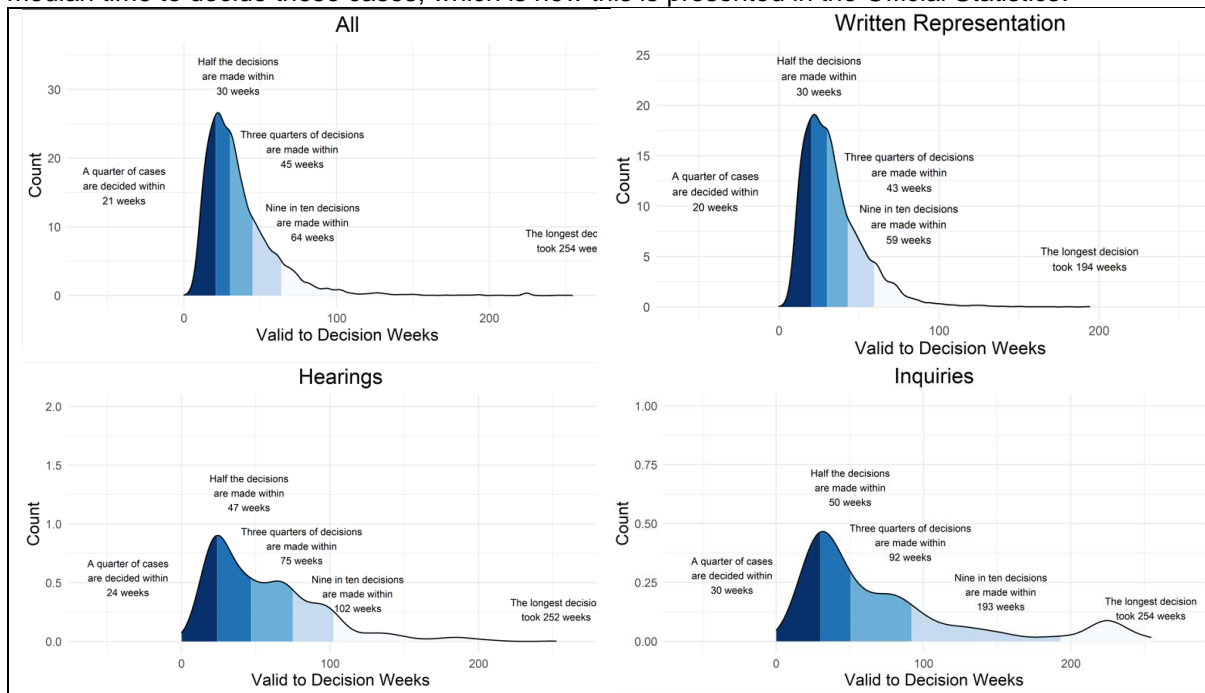
Figure 2 shows the proportion of cases decided in time bands. Figure 3 below shows more detail. It gives the full spread of time taken to decide cases, providing visibility of those cases far outside the accepted range. It shows all cases decided in the 12 months to the end of September 2023; and a breakdown by the decision procedure. Larger pictures are available at Annex D.

Figure 3 shows:

- The spread of time taken to decide for all cases, is similar to the spread for those decided wholly by written representations. This is because the large majority (16,795/18,221) of cases are decided this way.
- For hearings and inquiries, there were a 31 cases that took over four years (200 weeks and more).
- Three quarters of cases decided wholly by written representations are decided within 43 weeks. The corresponding time for three quarters of cases decided wholly or partly by Hearings is 75 weeks and for those wholly or partly by Inquiries is 92 weeks – in each case, more than twice as long.
- Nine in ten cases decided wholly by written representations are decided within 59 weeks. The corresponding time for nine out ten cases decided wholly or partly by Hearings (102 weeks) and Inquiries (193 weeks), is more than twice as long.

Figure 3 – Spread of time taken to decide cases (in weeks), for cases decided November 22 – October 23

Note: The figure for “Half the decisions are made within” is the 50th percentile; this is the same as the median time to decide these cases, which is how this is presented in the Official Statistics.



Source: Horizon

The Ministerial measure⁴ requires information on how long appeal decisions take from valid receipt to decision⁵, with information on various percentiles.

Ambition: Decision time for 50th percentile falling. Decision time for 90th percentile falling faster than 50th percentile.

The ambition is that cases are decided more quickly, and the time taken for longest cases is reduced. If the ambition is met, the gap between the 50th percentile and 90th percentile needs to reduce.

⁴ Measure: How long appeal decisions take from valid receipt to decision with information on 25th, 50th, 75th, 90th and 100th percentiles accompanied by reasons to explain what factors affected longer or shorter timeframes.

⁵ As noted in Footnote 1 above, the date for ‘validly received’ is the date on which the information was received, even if is assessed as being valid on a later date.

What is a percentile?

A percentile is a measure that shows the value below which a given percentage of the values in a group of numbers fall.

For example, if we tell you the 25th percentile for decision times, then you know that 25% of decisions are issued in less time (or the same time) as that.

Table 2 below shows the 25th, 50th, 75th and 90th percentiles for valid to decision, in weeks, for the decisions made from November 2022 to October 2023. Note that these match the timings given in text on the shapes in Figure 3 above.

Table 2 - Percentiles for Valid to Decision (in weeks) for decisions made November 2022 to October 2023 – and number of decisions in that time

Procedure	25 th percentile	50 th percentile	75 th percentile	90 th percentile	100 th percentile	Number of decisions
Written reps	21 weeks	30 weeks	43 weeks	60 weeks	194 weeks	16,969
Hearing	24 weeks	44 weeks	74 weeks	103 weeks	252 weeks	916
Inquiry	30 weeks	50 weeks	84 weeks	154 weeks	254 weeks	518
All	21 weeks	31 weeks	45 weeks	64 weeks	254 weeks	18,403

Source: Horizon

If performance changes, it will be more quickly apparent by looking at quarterly data than 12 monthly data. Annex E shows the same percentiles, for decisions in the three months April to June 2023. There are relatively few hearings and inquiries in each quarter, which means quarterly percentiles for these appeals are susceptible to extreme values - so they should be viewed with caution.

Figure 4: All Appeal Decisions, 50th and 90th Percentile for Valid to Decision, By Quarter, Oct 21 – Sept 23

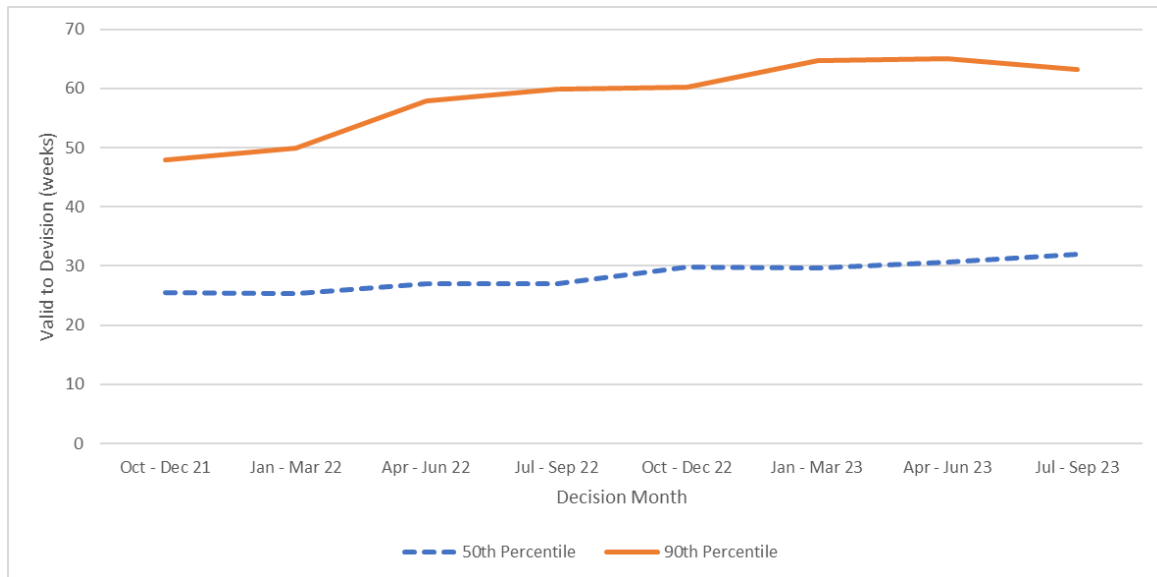


Table 3 - All appeal Decisions, 50th and 90th percentiles of Valid to Decision (weeks), October 2021 to Sept 2023

Decision made:	50 th percentile	90 th percentile	Gap
Oct - Dec 21	25 Weeks	48 Weeks	23 Weeks
Jan - Mar 22	25 Weeks	50 Weeks	25 Weeks
Apr - Jun 22	27 Weeks	58 Weeks	31 Weeks
Jul - Sep 22	27 Weeks	60 Weeks	33 Weeks
Oct - Dec 22	30 Weeks	60 Weeks	30 Weeks
Jan - Mar 23	30 Weeks	65 Weeks	35 Weeks
Apr - Jun 23	31 Weeks	65 Weeks	34 Weeks
Jul - Sep 23	32 Weeks	63 Weeks	31 Weeks

Source: Horizon

The table above covers all appeal decisions. Annex F gives figures for appeals decided wholly by written representations; wholly or partially through hearings; and wholly or partially through inquiries.

C. Customer Satisfaction

Ambition: Proportion of customers reporting satisfaction with the Planning Inspectorate’s services rising annually

No new analysis relevant to this measure is presented this quarter. The Planning Inspectorate have worked with the Institute for Customer Service to conduct a satisfaction survey. The data capture phase was carried out in April and early May

2023. The results of this survey show that Planning Inspectorate was given an overall satisfaction score of 56.8.

It is not simple to compare these customer service results against other organisations, given the nature of the services the Planning Inspectorate provides. For instance, based on customer complaint data, almost a half of the complaints that the Inspectorate received were complaints about an Inspector’s decision, rather than a complaint about how the process was run.

The results suggested that the organisation is underperforming in these key areas:

- Experience
- Complaint handling
- Customer Ethos
- Emotional Connection
- Ethics

Action plans will be put in place to address these areas of concern to optimise, evolve and ultimately improve our performance.

D. Number of Cases Quality Assured

Ambition: There is no minimum number or percentage ambition on this measure.

During the three months July to September, 990 appeal cases were quality assured. These are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Number of appeal decisions quality assured, July to September 2023

Number	Category	Explanation
119	Inspector Manager team reading	Inspector Managers are expected to review a proportion of their Inspectors’ decisions post-decision. This is to ensure quality standards and to identify learning opportunities and to check for consistency with the relevant quality framework.
64	APOs	Recommendations made by Appeals Planning Officers (APOs) are all reviewed as part of routine quality assurance before a decision is issued by an Inspector.
807	Inspector in Training – pre-decision	The majority of decisions made by Inspectors in Training (IITs) are reviewed for teaching purposes. Each review is by an experienced Inspector.
990	Total Appeal decisions	

Source: MiPINS

To put these totals in context, the 990 appeal decisions quality assured constitutes approximately a fifth (21%) of all decisions (4,635) issued over that period.

Table 5 shows the number of cases quality assured, beyond appeal cases, for the same quarter. These are much larger more complex cases than the average appeal case.

Table 5 - Number of Other Cases Quality Assured, July to September 2023

Number	Category	Explanation
7	Local Plans	All Local Plans are quality assured as part of the examination process. One Local Plan Report was issued in this quarter; quality assurance also took place for plans yet to be published.
3	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP)	All NSIP decisions are quality assured as part of the examination process. Three recommendation reports were submitted to the Secretary of State this quarter.

Source: Local Plan and NSIP case records

Annex A - Proportion of Appeals Valid First Time for Selected Appeal Types, Appeals Received Jul 2022 to Jun 2023 (Provisional)

Appeal Type	Proportion valid on first submission	Number of Appeals Received
Planning Appeal	54.5%	11,039
Householder (HAS)	75.5%	6,196
Enforcement Notice	32.6%	3,104
Lawful Development Certificate	62.0%	830
Commercial Appeal Service (CAS)	76.4%	539
Environmental	40.2%	82
Appeal against Enforcement Listed Building Notice/Enforcement Conservation Area Notice	54.8%	73
Rights of Way	50.0%	58
Advert Discontinuance	83.3%	6

Source: Horizon

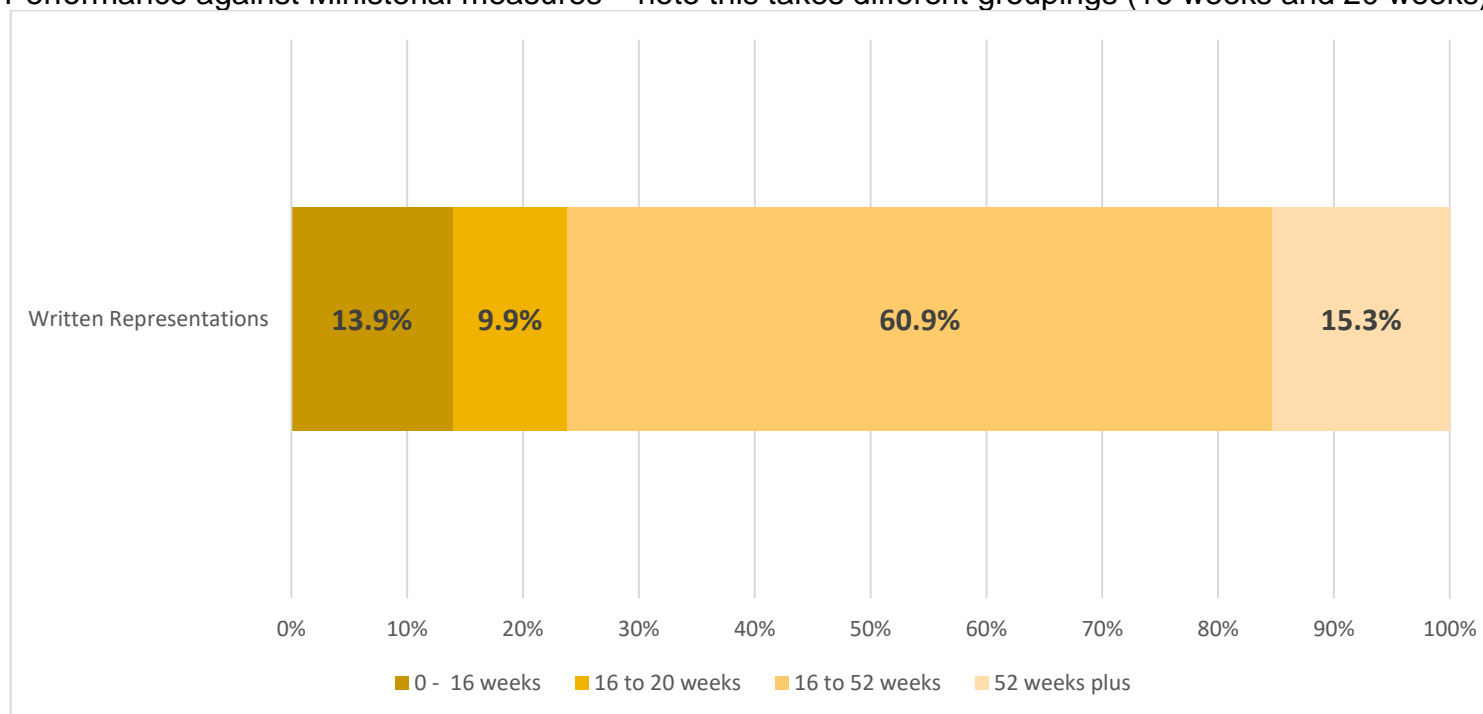
Note: Appeals not yet validated are included in the number of appeals received but excluded from the calculation on proportion valid on first submission

Annex B: Proportion of Appeals decided within 20, 26 and 52 weeks - Decisions October 2022 to September 2023

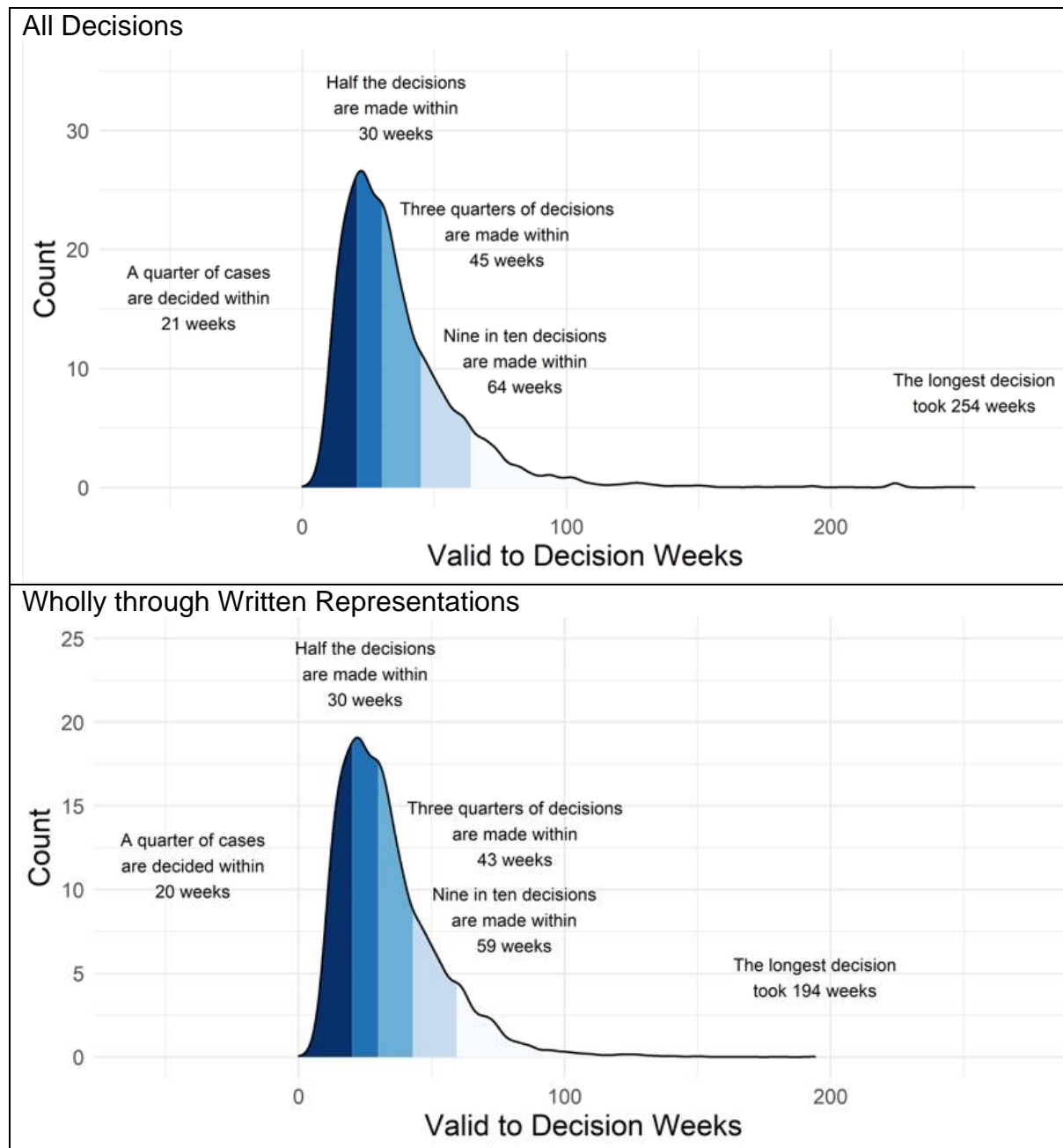
	Within 20 weeks	Within 26 weeks	Within 52 weeks	More than 52 weeks
Wholly Written Reps	23.5%	15.4%	45.6%	15.5%
Wholly or partly Hearings	11.8%	19.4%	25.3%	43.4%
Wholly or partly Inquiries	1.9%	14.5%	35.9%	47.7%

Annex C: Decisions made wholly through written representations – Decisions November 2022 to October 2023 - Weeks from valid to Decision

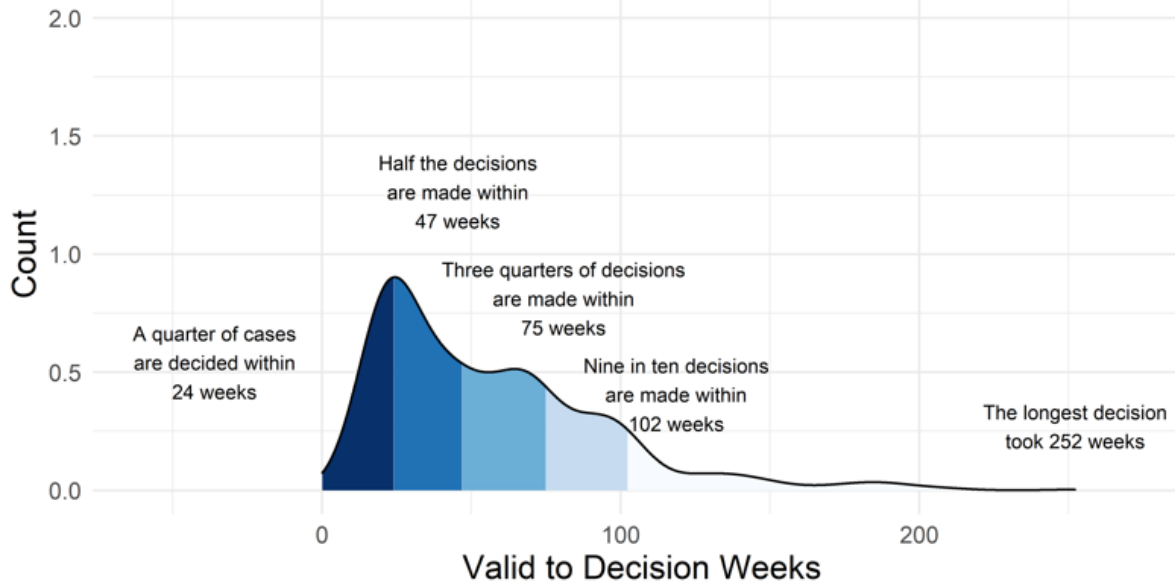
Performance against Ministerial measures – note this takes different groupings (16 weeks and 20 weeks)



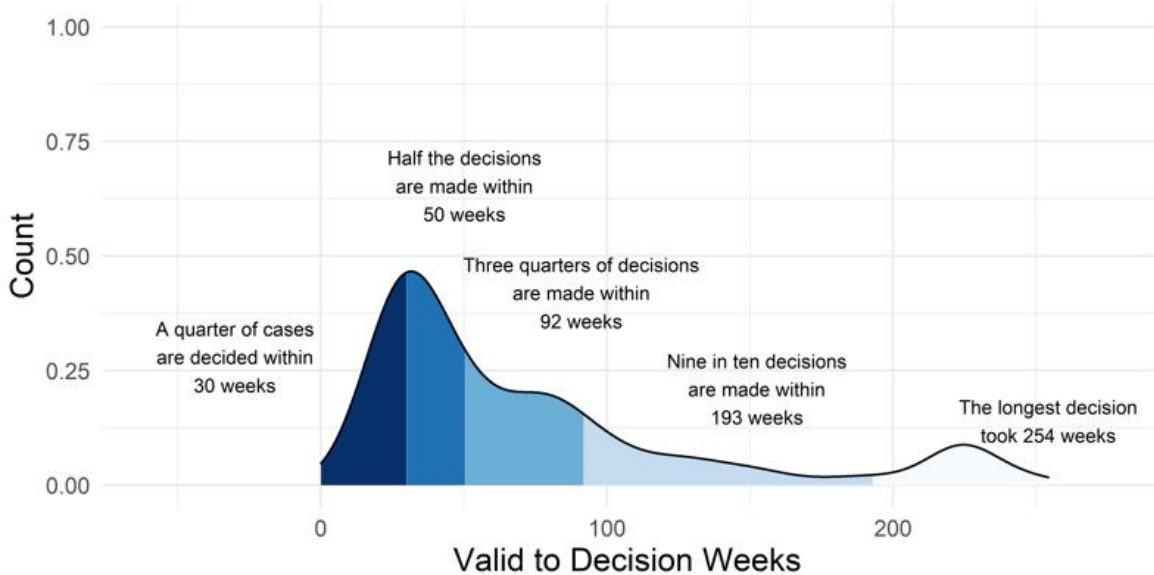
Annex D – Variation in Valid to Decisions (weeks) for appeal decisions made October 2022 to September 2023, by procedure.



Wholly or Partially Through Hearings



Wholly or Partially Through Inquiries



Annex E - Percentiles for Valid to Decision (in weeks) for decisions made July 2023 to September 2023 and number of decisions in that time

Procedure	25 th percentile	50 th percentile	75 th percentile	90 th percentile	100 th percentile	Number of decisions
Written reps	22.4	31.9	45.4	60.9	180.4	22.4
Hearing	23.4	31.6	67.7	105.9	198.6	23.4
Inquiry	27.6	54.0	73.0	118.7	188.0	27.6
All	22.9	32.0	46.1	63.3	198.6	22.9

Source: Horizon

Annex F - Appeal Decisions, 50th and 90th percentiles of Valid to Decision (weeks), October 2022 to September 2023 - by procedure

Note: all measurements are in weeks

Wholly by written representations

Decision made:	50 th percentile	90 th percentile	Gap
Oct - Dec 21	25	42	18
Jan - Mar 22	24	45	20
Apr - Jun 22	26	49	23
Jul - Aug 22	26	53	27
Oct - Dec 22	29	56	26
Jan - Mar 23	29	59	30
Apr - Jun 23	34	65	31
Jul – Sep 23	43	70	27

Wholly or partially through Hearings

Decision made:	50 th percentile	90 th percentile	Gap
Oct - Dec 21	51	106	55
Jan - Mar 22	53	106	53
Apr - Jun 22	91	184	93
Jul - Aug 22	50	146	95
Oct - Dec 22	47	100	53
Jan - Mar 23	48	100	53
Apr - Jun 23	47	119	72
Jul – Sep 23	60	125	65

Wholly or partially through Inquiries

Decision made:	50 th percentile	90 th percentile	Gap
Oct - Dec 21	54	122	68
Jan - Mar 22	58	105	47
Apr - Jun 22	43	117	74
Jul - Aug 22	69	128	59
Oct - Dec 22	39	100	62
Jan - Mar 23	76	224	149
Apr - Jun 23	62	148	86
Jul – Sep 23	62	135	74

Source: Horizon