



The Planning Inspectorate

Official Statistics
25th January 2024

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 January 2023 to December 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 December was 29 weeks.

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

Procedure type	Last 12 months	December 2023
Written Representations	30 weeks	29 weeks
Hearings	37 weeks	34 weeks
Inquiries	55 weeks	68 weeks
All Cases	31 weeks	29 weeks

The median time for planning cases was 28 weeks in December 2023. The 12 month median was 29 weeks.

Enforcement decisions made in December 2023 had a median decision time of 59 weeks, with the 12 month median being 55 weeks.

The median time for planning appeals decided by inquiry under the Rosewell Process in November was 29 weeks and over the 12 months to December 2023 was 30 weeks.

Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate made 18,310 appeal decisions¹ in the last 12 months, an average of 1,526 per month. The number of decisions in December 2023 was 1,428.

There were 1,315 written representations decisions in December 2023 and 16,974 in the last 12 months.

There were 801 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, and during December 2023, 65 decisions were issued.

There were 535 decisions made on inquiries during the last 12 months, with 48 in December 2023.

Planning Inspectors

There were 426 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate at the end of December 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 D explains the scope of this release and Background Notes has further information.

Decisions, Events & Open Cases

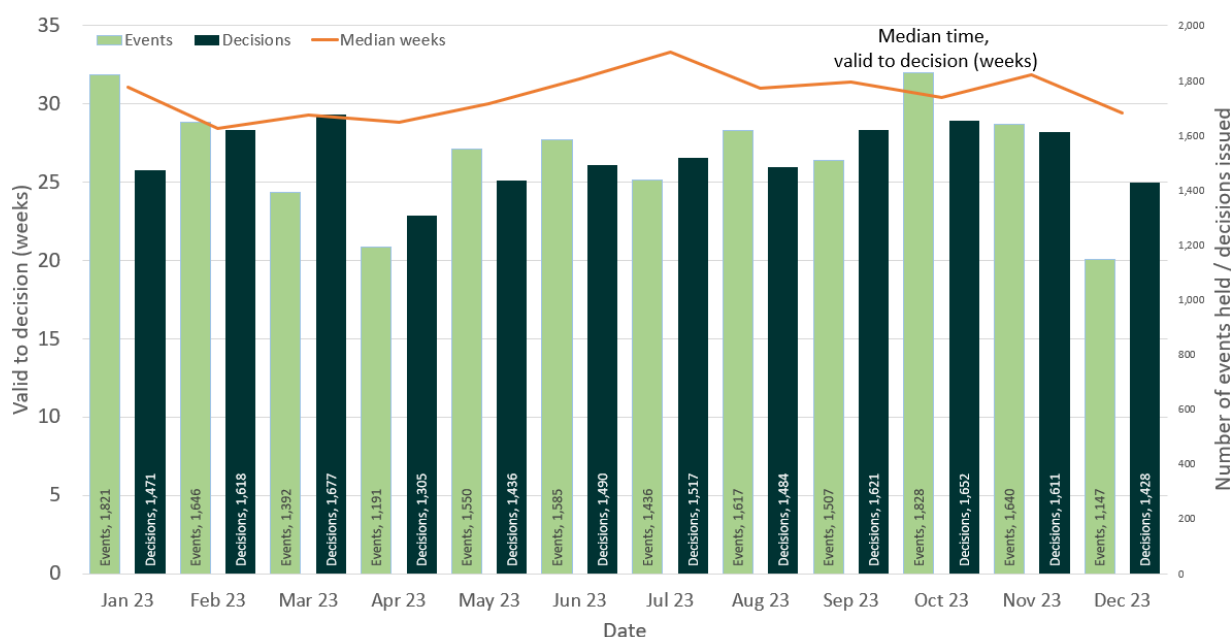
The number of decisions issued in December 2023 was 1,428, with a monthly average of 1,526 over the past 12 months.

The number of events recorded for December 2023 was 1,147, the average over the past 12 months was 1,530.

The median valid to decision time was 29 weeks in December 2023, as seen in Figure 1 and Table 1 below. The median valid to decision time has dropped slightly (2.4 weeks lower than November).

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; January 2023 to December 2023.



Source: Horizon

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

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

Month	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Events Held	1,821	1,646	1,392	1,191	1,550	1,585	1,436	1,617	1,507	1,828	1,640	1,147	18,360
Decisions	1,471	1,618	1,677	1,305	1,436	1,490	1,517	1,484	1,621	1,652	1,611	1,428	18,310
Median	31.1	28.4	29.3	28.9	30.0	31.6	33.3	31.0	31.4	30.4	31.9	29.4	30.7

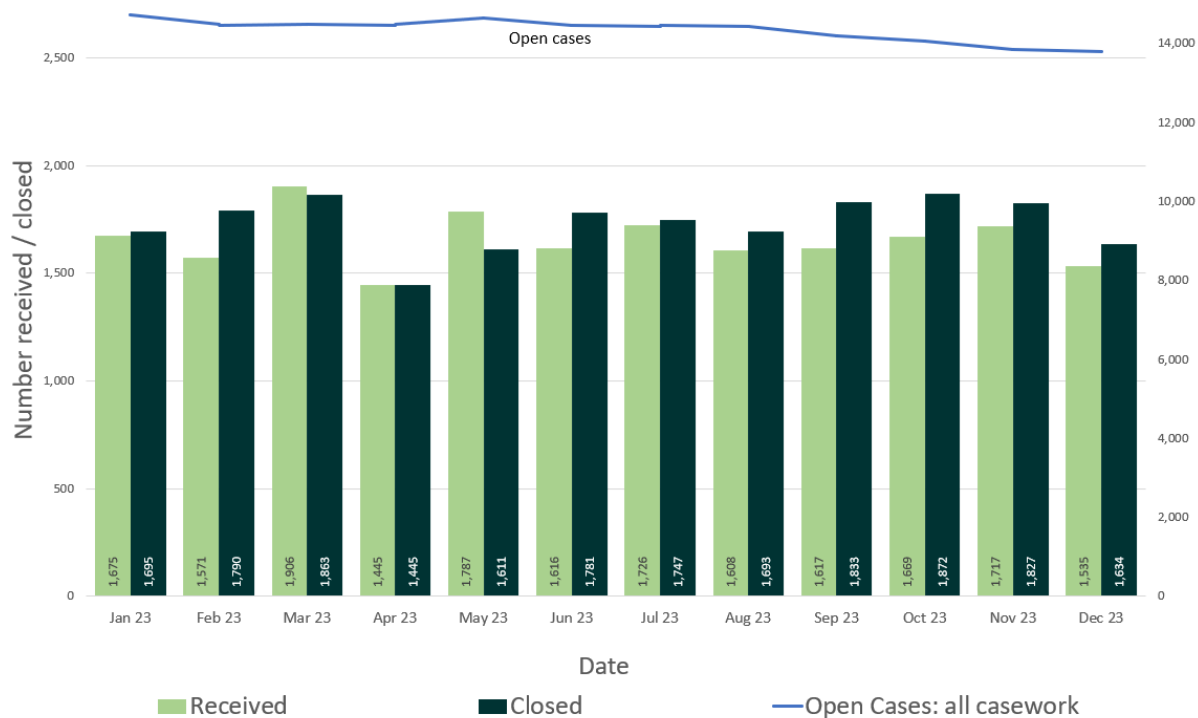
Source: Horizon

Figure 2 below shows the number of cases received, closed and open for each of the last 12 months. The number of cases closed has exceeded the number of cases received for each of the past seven 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; January 2023 to December 2023.



Source: Horizon

Note: 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.

Table 2: Number of cases received, closed and open; January 2023 to December 2023.

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

Month	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Received	1,675	1,571	1,906	1,445	1,787	1,616	1,726	1,608	1,617	1,669	1,717	1,535	19,872
Closed	1,695	1,790	1,863	1,445	1,611	1,781	1,747	1,693	1,833	1,872	1,827	1,634	20,791
Open	14,738	14,497	14,502	14,493	14,645	14,473	14,455	14,428	14,211	14,066	13,841	13,809	

Source: Horizon

Number of Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate has made 18,310 appeal decisions³ in the last 12 months. There were 1,428 cases decided in December 2023.

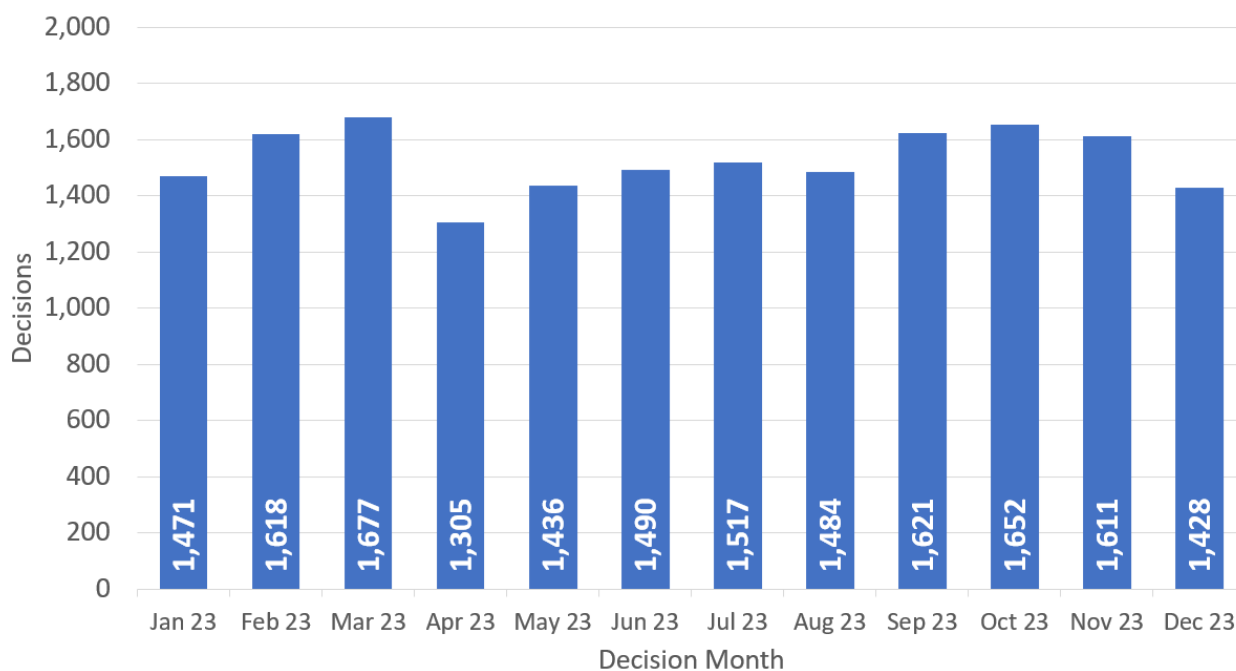
Table 3 below shows the monthly breakdown with fewer decisions for the month of April 2023 and September, October and November being among the highest.

Table 3: Appeal Decisions; January 2023 to December 2023.

Month	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Decisions	1,471	1,618	1,677	1,305	1,436	1,490	1,517	1,484	1,621	1,652	1,611	1,428	18,310

Source: Horizon

Figure 3 – Appeal Decisions; January 2023 to December 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 (16,974) were made on written representations. This is 93% 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 D 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 1,220 to around 1,560 per month over the past 12 months. There were 1,315 decisions in December 2023.

There were 801 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, the monthly average being 67. During December 2023 65 decisions were issued. In December 2023 48 decisions were made for inquiries. Decisions for inquiries since January 2023 have ranged between 28 and 79.

Table 4: Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; January 2023 to December 2023.

Month	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Written Representations	1,328	1,495	1,529	1,220	1,307	1,402	1,418	1,392	1,515	1,558	1,495	1,315	16,974
Hearings	64	77	81	57	89	59	65	63	60	54	67	65	801
Inquiries	79	46	67	28	40	29	34	29	46	40	49	48	535
Total	1,471	1,618	1,677	1,305	1,436	1,490	1,517	1,484	1,621	1,652	1,611	1,428	18,310
Month	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Planning	1,227	1,397	1,389	1,110	1,188	1,258	1,257	1,259	1,339	1,403	1,341	1,213	15,381
Enforcement	184	169	235	138	149	170	208	192	225	187	228	158	2,243
Specialist	60	52	53	57	99	62	52	33	57	62	42	57	686
Total	1,471	1,618	1,677	1,305	1,436	1,490	1,517	1,484	1,621	1,652	1,611	1,428	18,310

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.

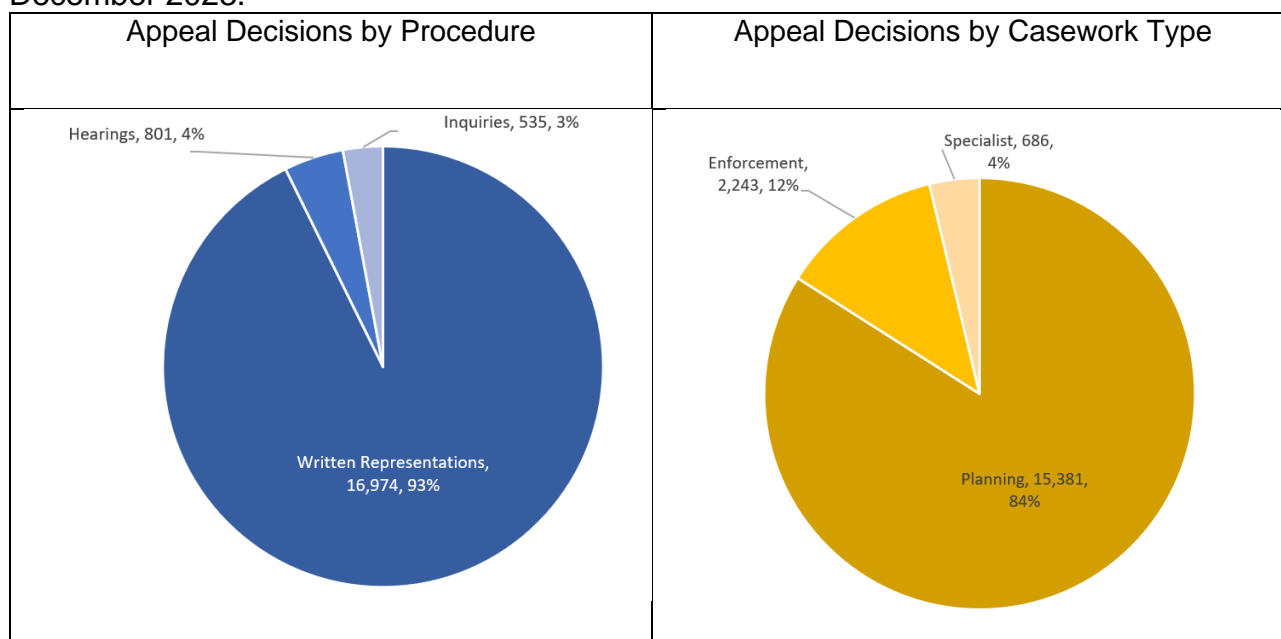
What are Enforcement cases? Enforcement covers enforcement appeals (i.e., appeals against the issue of an enforcement notice served by a local planning authority for alleged breaches of planning control), enforcement listed building notice appeals and lawful development certificate appeals.

What are Specialist cases? Specialist casework includes Common Land, Rights of Way orders (including Schedule 14 cases), Purchase orders, Tree Preservation Orders, 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 (15,381). This is about 84% of all appeal decisions made. There were 2,243 enforcement decisions and 686 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 187. Specialist casework figures continue to vary each month, from a high of 99 in May 2023 to a low of 33 in August 2023.

Figure 4 – Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; January 2023 to December 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 29 weeks for December 2023. Figure 5 shows the median has ranged from 28 to 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.

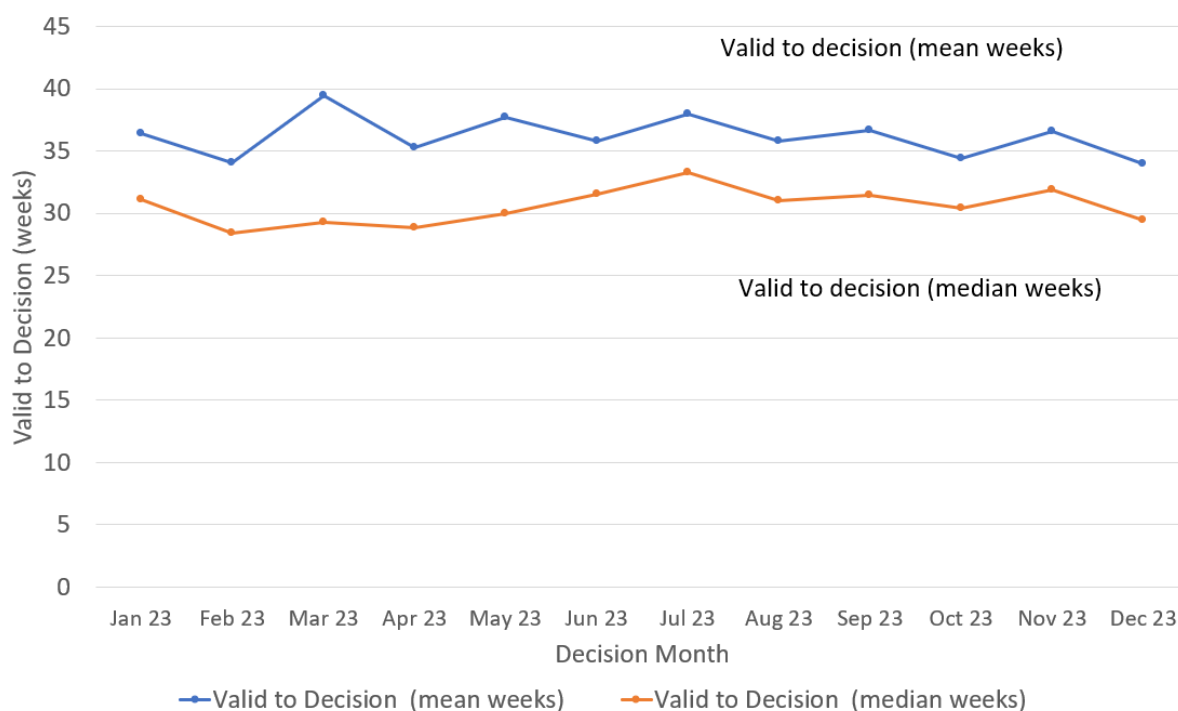
What are mean, median, and standard deviation?	
Measure	Definition
Mean	The total time taken divided by the number of cases. Also referred to as the 'average'. A measure of how long each case would take, if the total time taken was spread evenly across all cases.
Median	This is the time taken by the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

Month	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	31.1	28.4	29.3	28.9	30.0	31.6	33.3	31.0	31.4	30.4	31.9	29.4	30.7
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	36.4	34.1	39.5	35.3	37.7	35.8	38.0	35.8	36.7	34.4	36.6	33.9	36.2
Standard Deviation (weeks)	23.8	22.8	35.2	22.5	27.8	20.3	21.9	20.8	21.6	18.8	20.7	20.1	23.6

Source: Horizon

Figure 5: Median and mean Time to Decision; January 2023 to December 2023.



Note: Specialist casework timeliness measures exclude Tree Preservation Order cases

Procedure Type

Table 6 below shows decision timeliness broken down by the procedure type. Hearings and inquires have typically taken longer than written representations⁵, however, for the past seven 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 December 2023 is 30 weeks. The median time for hearings over the 12 months to December 2023 is 37 weeks. The median time to decide for inquiries over the 12 months to December 2023 was 55 weeks.

Table 6: Mean and Median Time to Decision, with Standard Deviation, by Procedure; January 2023 to December 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	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	WR	29.7	27.6	28.1	28.1	29.5	31.5	33.3	31.0	31.3	30.4	31.7	29.3	30.1
	HRG	58.4	38.3	45.1	35.1	56.6	33.6	32.9	29.6	33.1	28.1	32.0	33.9	36.9
	INQ	73.3	58.0	204.6	79.1	38.4	33.7	43.6	28.4	61.9	39.4	41.0	68.2	55.1
	All	30.4	28.4	29.3	28.9	30.0	31.6	33.3	31.0	31.4	30.4	31.9	29.4	30.7
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	WR	33.3	31.9	34.1	33.6	34.3	35.0	36.9	34.8	35.3	34.0	35.7	32.3	34.3
	HRG	57.9	52.6	57.9	49.4	70.6	44.4	52.1	49.0	49.4	43.0	42.9	45.9	52.2
	INQ	72.8	76.0	139.5	79.6	71.2	56.2	56.4	55.0	63.6	39.3	56.4	63.1	73.1
	All	36.4	34.1	39.5	35.3	37.7	35.8	38.0	35.8	36.7	34.4	36.6	33.9	36.2
Standard Deviation (weeks)	WR	18.2	17.9	20.6	20.1	20.6	18.9	20.0	18.0	19.5	18.1	19.1	17.1	19.1
	HRG	29.3	39.0	42.4	30.2	53.2	29.4	37.2	40.1	37.9	34.2	27.0	30.4	38.4
	INQ	49.8	54.6	88.7	40.7	57.2	40.1	35.6	47.2	32.9	15.5	37.7	39.8	57.8
	All	23.8	22.8	35.2	22.5	27.8	20.3	21.9	20.8	21.6	18.8	20.7	20.1	23.6
Decisions	WR	1,328	1,495	1,529	1,220	1,307	1,402	1,418	1,392	1,515	1,558	1,495	1,315	16,974
	HRG	64	77	81	57	89	59	65	63	60	54	67	65	801
	INQ	79	46	67	28	40	29	34	29	46	40	49	48	535
	All	1,471	1,618	1,677	1,305	1,436	1,490	1,517	1,484	1,621	1,652	1,611	1,428	18,310

Source: Horizon

Note: Tree Preservation Order cases are not included in timeliness measures

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

⁵ Written representations includes Rights of Way Schedule 14 appeals

inquiries have experienced considerable month to month changes in the spread of decision times.

Casework Category

The nature of the cases the Planning Inspectorate deal with varies widely and several factors play a part in determining how long it takes to make a decision. One such factor is the type of casework. Table 7 below shows the time taken to decide, in planning cases, in enforcement cases, and in specialist⁶ cases, as does Figure 6.

The median time to decision for planning cases (there are many more of these decisions than in the other categories) is lower than for enforcement cases; and less variable than the times for specialist cases. Table 7 and Figure 6 show the median time for planning cases has been 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; January 2023 to December 2023.

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

Casework Category	Measure	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Planning Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	28.3	26.1	26.0	26.6	28.7	29.9	31.6	29.0	29.9	29.3	29.9	27.9	28.7
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	31.6	30.7	31.5	32.1	33.3	32.5	34.9	32.7	33.4	32.0	32.4	30.2	32.3
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	16.3	17.8	18.6	20.0	22.3	17.5	19.8	17.4	18.9	16.7	16.5	15.6	18.2
Enforcement Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	63.4	54.1	67.6	57.9	58.4	53.1	53.1	49.9	50.0	48.3	57.7	58.5	55.1
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	67.9	60.1	86.1	60.5	68.8	56.2	53.4	54.4	55.2	51.7	57.6	58.9	61.1
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	36.6	36.1	62.3	26.4	41.0	21.2	22.3	26.5	24.8	23.0	22.6	25.6	34.8
Specialist Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	33.0	45.4	27.4	34.6	44.7	34.3	50.4	34.6	36.4	35.1	51.7	41.7	37.8
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	38.4	52.8	42.9	36.7	49.7	48.1	56.2	45.0	43.3	41.9	57.9	50.0	46.9
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	30.6	36.9	40.7	20.0	32.8	35.1	36.9	37.5	32.7	26.9	42.3	33.3	35.0

Source: Horizon

Note: Specialist casework timeliness measures exclude Tree Preservation Order cases

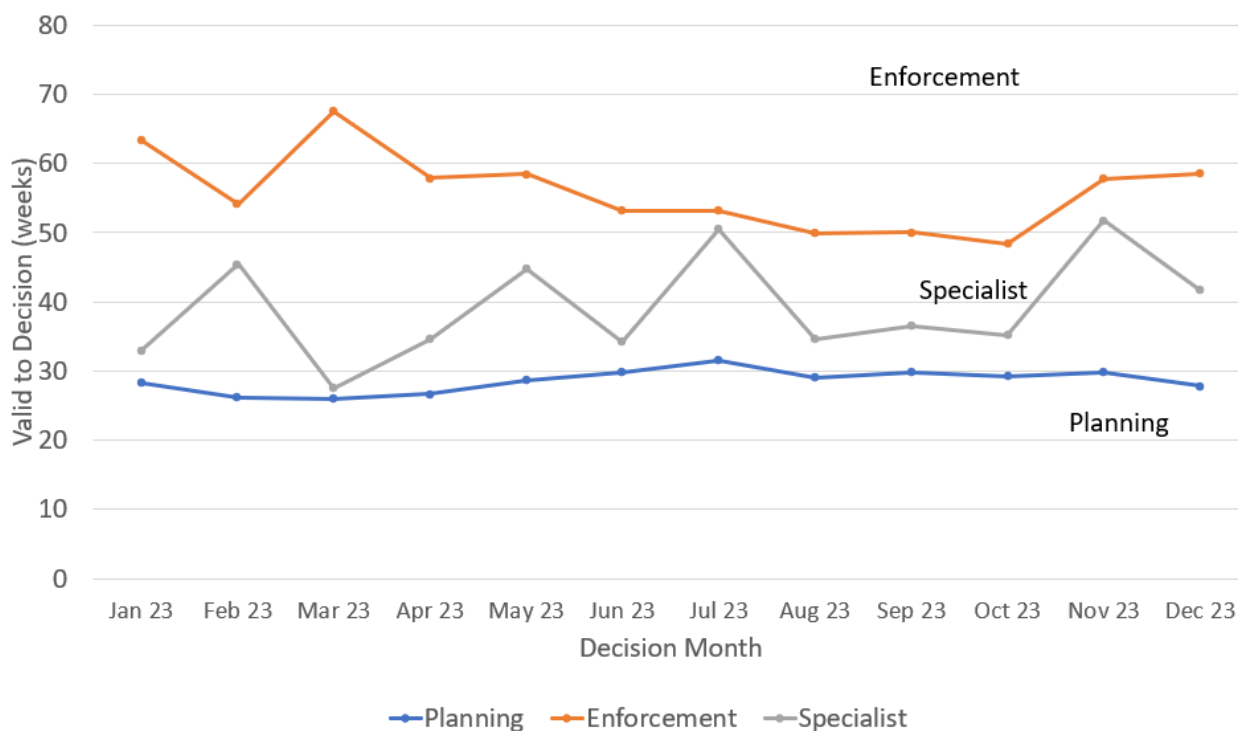
Annex A gives information on median and mean time to decision, with standard deviation, for the three procedure types, split by planning, enforcement, and specialist casework categories.

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.

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: January 2023 to December 2023^P.



Source: Horizon

Note: Specialist casework timeliness measures exclude Tree Preservation Order cases

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

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

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

Measure	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Decisions	25	15	17	9	20	17	15	21	32	16	24	21	232
Median (weeks)	30.0	31.7	31.1	24.9	28.6	30.0	24.9	25.3	61.9	37.1	26.2	29.1	29.9
Mean (weeks)	33.5	40.2	33.8	34.9	30.5	34.3	30.0	33.5	47.1	35.2	31.6	44.2	36.3
St. Dev. (weeks)	11.7	29.2	13.7	20.2	8.9	25.8	12.2	16.8	16.2	9.0	11.7	23.0	18.1

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

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

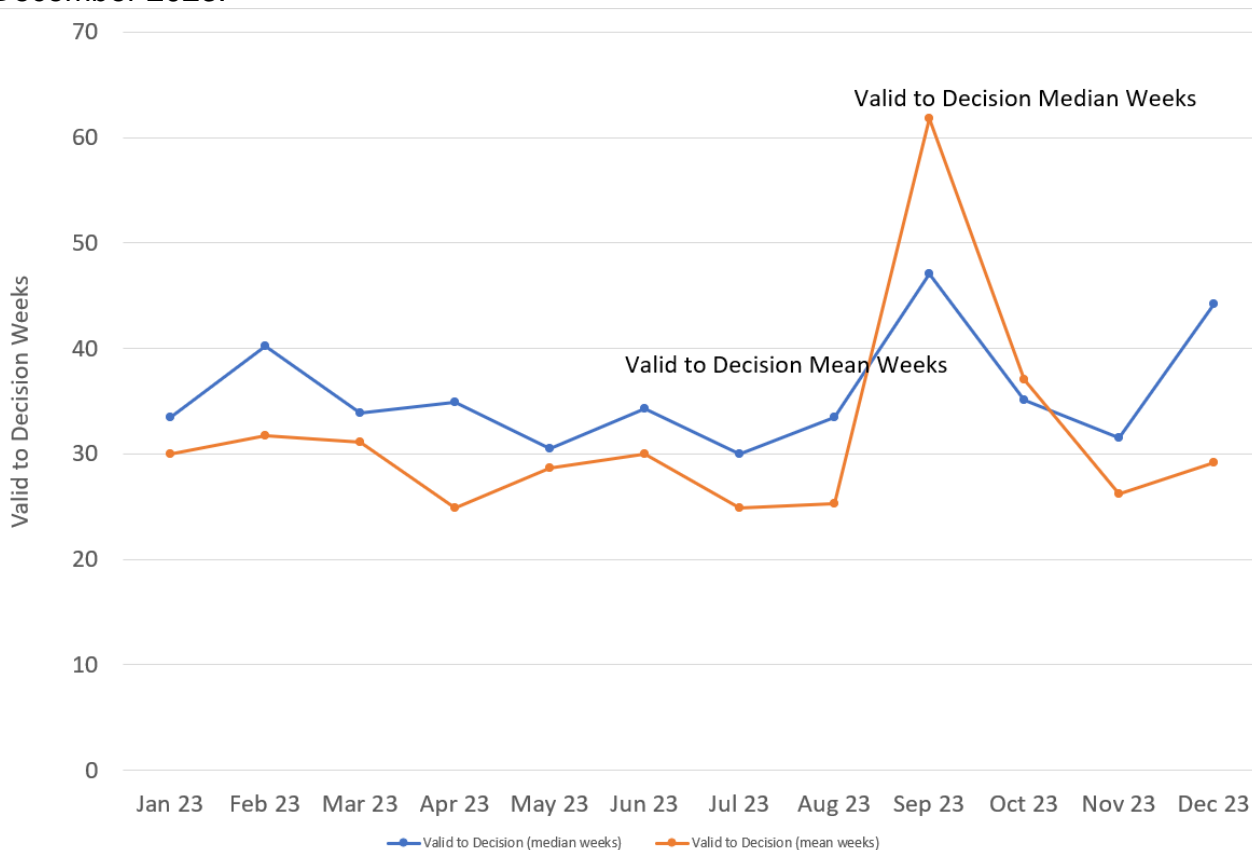
Table 9: Decisions, Planning Inquiry Cases under non-Rosewell Process; January 2023 to December 2023.

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

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; January 2023 to December 2023.



Source: Horizon

Open Cases

At the end of December 2023, the Planning Inspectorate had 13,809 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.

The open cases comprised of 12,388 cases being handled through written representations; 800 through hearings; and 568 through inquiries, as well as 51 not currently allocated a procedure type. This is not the number of ‘live’ hearings and inquiries since it includes cases

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

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.

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

Stage	WR	HRG	INQ	Total
Case received but yet to be deemed valid	2,148	27	8	2,184
Case deemed valid but yet to “start” [Note 1]	2,753	235	116	3,151
Case started but event (site visit/ hearing/ inquiry) has not yet happened	5,923	439	361	6,723
Event has happened/ started [Note 2] but decision not yet issued	1,564	99	83	1,749
Total	12,388	800	568	13,809

Source: Horizon

Note 1 - there are 53 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 January 2023 to December 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 426 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in December 2023 – with a full-time equivalent of 384

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

Month	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Headcount	409	412	424	422	422	428	439	437	432	430	428	426
FTE	366.0	368.1	380.2	378.3	378.6	383.7	394.2	393.2	388.3	386.4	385.2	383.6

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

⁹ 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).

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.

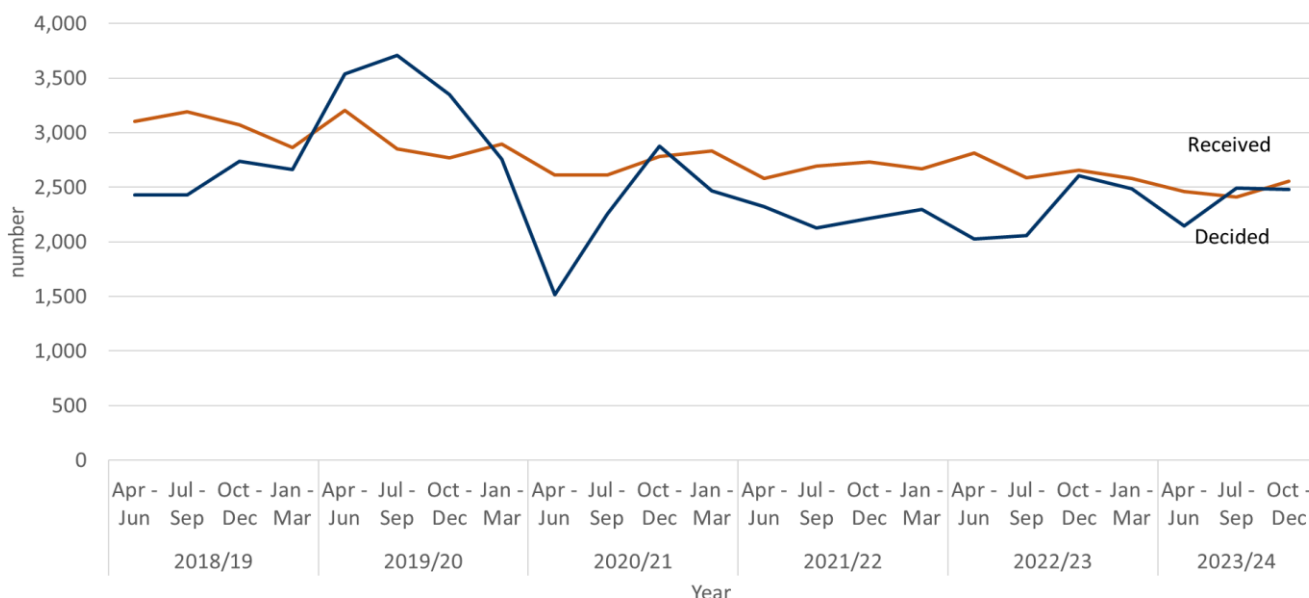
Number of appeals received compared to decisions issued.

In the last twelve months, January 2023 to December 2023, there have been 10,007 Section 78 planning appeals (s78) received, 6.7% lower than for the period January 2022 to December 2022.

In the last five financial years (April 2018 to December 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 2,502 and the average number of decisions per quarter was 2,401.

The number of appeals received in October to December 2023 (2,557) was 3.7% lower than the same period in 2022. Appeal receipts since the pandemic started average 2,638 per quarter (April 20 to December 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.

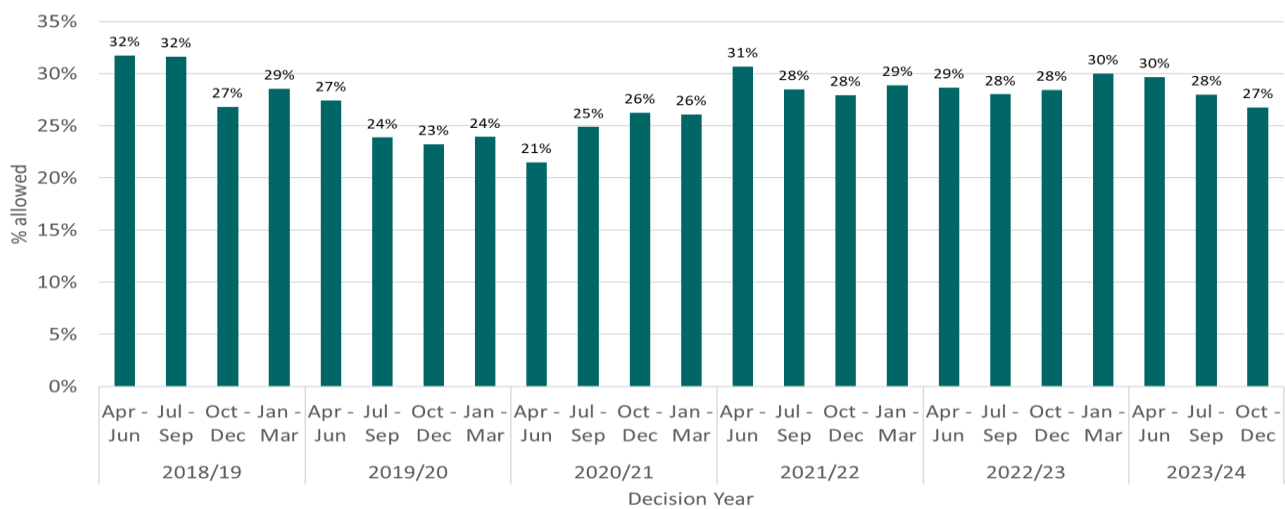
The number of decisions issued in October to December 2023, was 0.6% lower than the previous quarter and 4.9% lower than the corresponding quarter last year.

Appeals Allowed

The percentage of Section 78 planning appeals that were allowed in the latest quarter was 27%, a fall from 28% in the previous quarter (see figure 9). There were 663 appeals allowed between October and December 2023, 34 less than in the previous quarter. (see Figure 11).

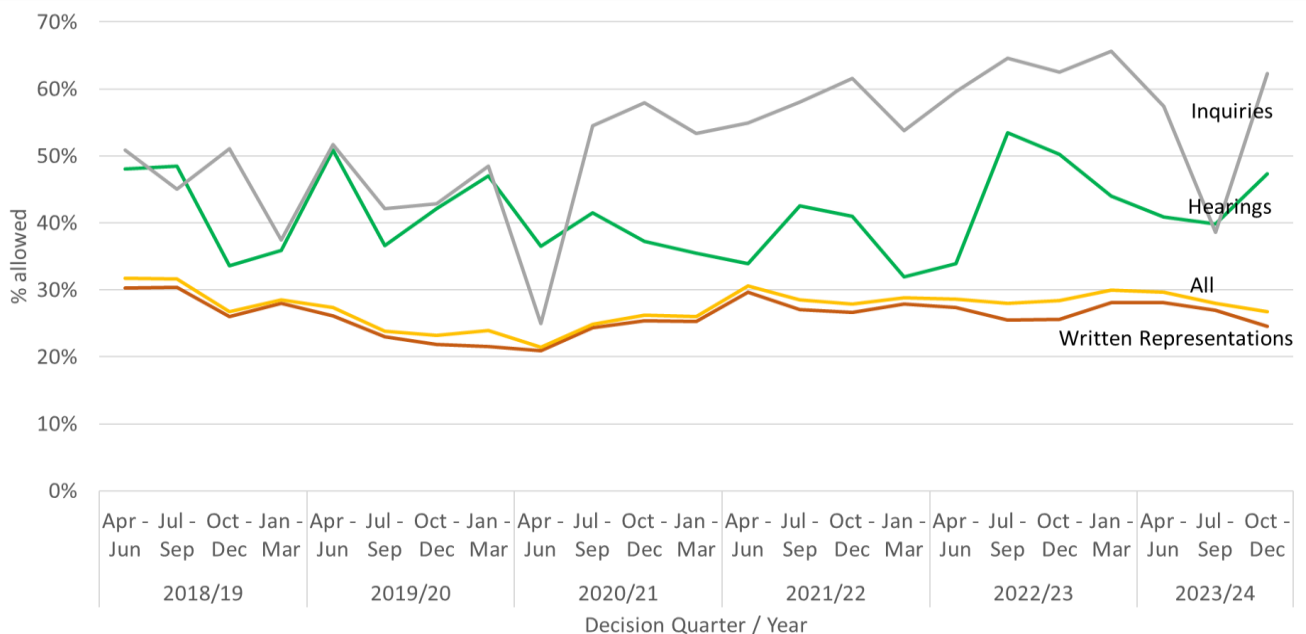
The consistency in the overall percentage allowed is heavily influenced by the number of written representations appeals allowed, as this procedure type contributes by far the greatest number of decisions each year. There has been slightly more variation in the percentage allowed for hearings and inquiries.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

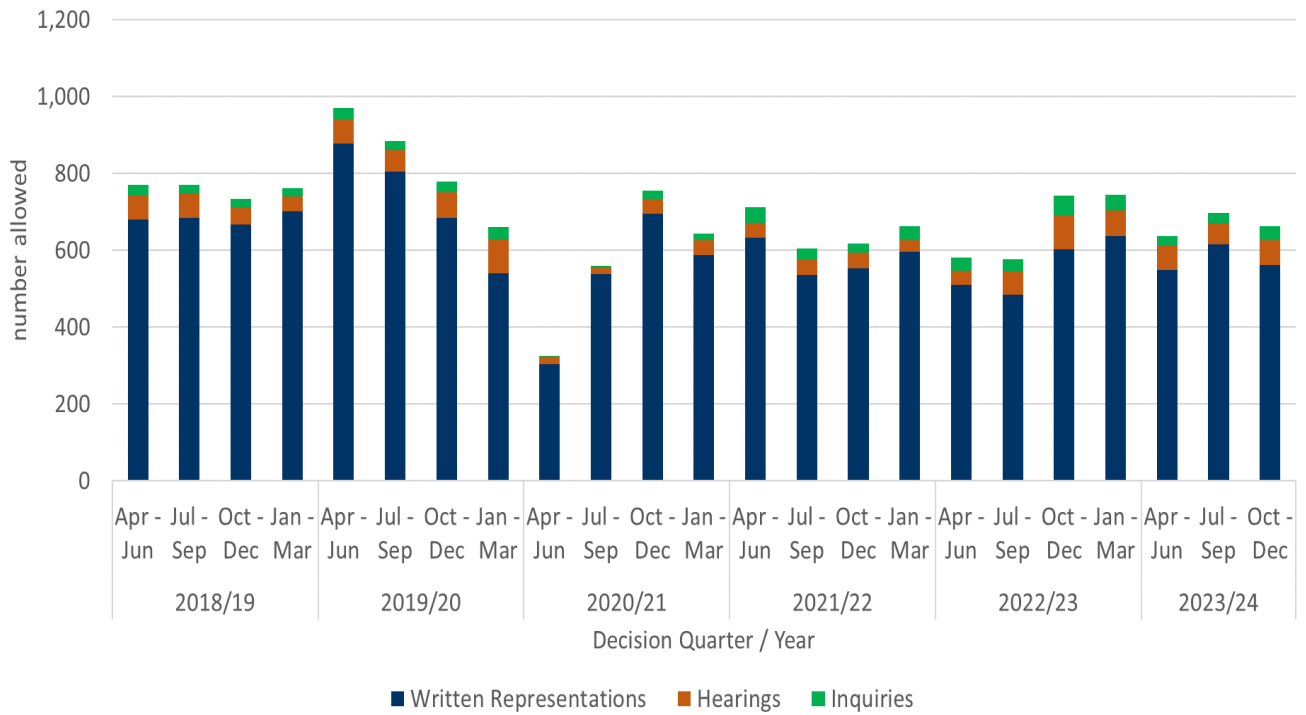
Figure 10: S78 planning appeals, percentage allowed by procedure type, 2018/19 to 2023/24, by quarter



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, July and October 2023 for inquiries decisions.

Procedure	Measure	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	1,160	1,323	1,310	1,059	1,106	1,189	1,191	1,188	1,263	1,345	1,270	1,143	14,547
	Median Average Weeks	28.1	26.0	25.9	26.6	28.3	29.9	31.9	29.1	29.7	29.3	30.0	27.9	28.7
	Mean Average Weeks	30.9	29.8	30.6	31.4	31.8	32.0	34.2	32.2	32.7	31.7	32.4	29.5	31.6
	Standard Deviation	15.4	15.9	17.0	18.7	18.2	16.5	18.1	15.7	17.7	15.8	16.4	14.3	16.7
Hearings	Decisions	39	54	59	39	62	52	49	50	43	42	45	46	580
	Median Average Weeks	44.7	25.4	40.3	27.0	40.2	31.5	25.4	26.3	25.1	25.0	25.1	24.0	28.2
	Mean Average Weeks	48.5	41.9	47.6	42.7	61.4	42.9	50.7	43.4	40.1	39.5	31.2	38.2	44.6
	Standard Deviation	27.5	31.5	32.8	30.6	52.9	29.5	40.5	39.3	34.1	35.0	15.7	28.6	35.8
Inquires	Decisions	28	20	20	12	20	17	17	21	33	16	26	24	254
	Median Average Weeks	30.0	32.5	33.4	28.8	28.6	30.0	27.7	25.3	61.9	37.1	26.2	31.1	30.7
	Mean Average Weeks	37.3	55.5	42.7	56.6	30.5	34.3	36.1	33.5	50.2	35.2	34.4	45.4	40.9
	Standard Deviation	18.8	41.4	31.5	43.9	8.9	25.8	20.4	16.8	23.7	9.0	19.9	24.0	26.2
All Planning Cases	Decisions	1,227	1,397	1,389	1,110	1,188	1,258	1,257	1,259	1,339	1,403	1,341	1,213	15,381
	Median Average Weeks	28.3	26.1	26.0	26.6	28.7	29.9	31.6	29.0	29.9	29.3	29.9	27.9	28.7
	Mean Average Weeks	31.6	30.7	31.5	32.1	33.3	32.5	34.9	32.7	33.4	32.0	32.4	30.2	32.3
	Standard Deviation	16.3	17.8	18.6	20.0	22.3	17.5	19.8	17.4	18.9	16.7	16.5	15.6	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 March, May and November 2023 and all months for inquiry decisions other than January, February, March and October 2023.

Procedure	Measure	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	122	130	174	112	112	157	185	180	203	156	189	125	1,845
	Median Average Weeks	53.5	48.2	58.1	53.6	56.7	52.9	51.9	48.2	47.6	49.4	55.3	53.9	52.1
	Mean Average Weeks	56.7	51.6	60.8	54.1	56.6	54.4	51.9	51.9	51.0	52.8	55.2	54.4	54.1
	Standard Deviation	23.6	22.6	24.8	21.9	24.5	17.7	21.3	22.3	19.7	22.9	19.9	18.9	21.8
Hearings	Decisions	15	17	20	12	23	6	11	9	13	11	22	16	175
	Median Average Weeks	74.7	73.6	67.4	69.9	78.9	50.5	34.0	58.3	75.3	61.0	63.8	62.6	68.9
	Mean Average Weeks	80.8	87.9	84.1	70.5	96.5	56.6	50.4	74.8	81.9	56.6	66.7	66.8	75.7
	Standard Deviation	22.3	40.8	51.4	17.8	48.9	25.1	24.8	40.6	34.7	27.0	29.5	25.5	38.3
Inquires	Decisions	47	22	41	14	14	7	12	3	9	20	17	17	223
	Median Average Weeks	82.0	72.6	224.3	114.2	149.3	101.3	80.1	146.1	94.6	46.3	72.7	87.6	82.4
	Mean Average Weeks	92.9	89.0	194.1	103.3	120.8	98.2	78.6	146.1	110.2	40.3	73.3	84.2	107.5
	Standard Deviation	51.4	61.9	62.9	23.2	63.3	39.2	19.8	0.0	20.2	17.0	29.9	44.5	66.0
All Enforcement Cases	Decisions	184	169	235	138	149	170	208	192	225	187	228	158	2,243
	Median Average Weeks	63.4	54.1	67.6	57.9	58.4	53.1	53.1	49.9	50.0	48.3	57.7	58.5	55.1
	Mean Average Weeks	67.9	60.1	86.1	60.5	68.8	56.2	53.4	54.4	54.3	51.7	57.6	58.9	61.1
	Standard Deviation	36.6	36.1	62.3	26.4	41.0	21.2	22.3	26.5	24.8	23.0	22.6	25.6	34.8

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	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	46	42	45	49	89	56	42	24	49	57	36	47	582
	Median Average Weeks	23.6	35.6	23.1	31.9	37.5	31.6	48.6	23.6	28.1	34.0	43.6	39.7	32.7
	Mean Average Weeks	30.4	40.1	31.5	34.0	42.1	42.1	50.9	31.6	40.4	40.5	49.0	44.4	40.2
	Standard Deviation	23.1	26.1	23.9	18.9	29.1	35.2	33.3	20.7	33.5	27.6	35.0	28.8	29.6
Hearings	Decisions	10	6	2	6	4	1	5	4	4	1	0	3	46
	Median Average Weeks	70.6	30.3	99.1	37.6	71.5	-	70.9	63.8	37.2	-	-	65.6	63.8
	Mean Average Weeks	63.5	30.3	99.1	52.6	64.4	-	70.0	61.9	37.2	-	-	65.6	62.9
	Standard Deviation	19.0	0.0	55.9	24.3	26.4	-	12.2	16.4	1.1	-	-	0.0	27.5
Inquires	Decisions	4	4	6	2	6	5	5	5	4	4	6	7	58
	Median Average Weeks	73.8	111.6	69.9	51.9	97.5	68.3	42.7	65.9	59.9	47.1	93.6	78.4	68.5
	Mean Average Weeks	85.0	106.1	88.7	51.9	91.3	71.7	71.9	90.6	68.9	50.2	103.9	72.3	81.5
	Standard Deviation	41.7	26.3	58.3	3.0	23.6	23.9	58.4	59.4	21.9	20.7	46.6	43.1	44.6
All Specialist Cases	Decisions	60	52	53	57	99	62	52	33	57	62	42	57	686
	Median Average Weeks	33.0	45.4	27.4	34.6	44.7	34.3	50.4	34.6	36.4	35.1	51.7	41.7	37.8
	Mean Average Weeks	38.4	52.8	42.9	36.7	49.7	48.1	56.2	45.0	43.3	41.9	57.9	50.0	46.9
	Standard Deviation	30.6	36.9	40.7	20.0	32.8	35.1	36.9	37.5	32.7	26.9	42.3	33.3	35.0

Tree Preservation order decisions have been removed from the average time calculations in this table due to problems with recorded validation dates, which mean that we are currently unable to accurately calculate their decision times.

Annex B – Detailed Information on timeliness (December 2023)

The information below is published today on the number and length of decisions made in December 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	31.1	33.8	675
	Hearings	24.0	38.3	45
	Inquiries	33.1	45.5	21
Householder appeals	Written Representations	18.0	19.5	375
Enforcement appeals	Written Representations	53.9	54.4	125
	Hearings	62.6	66.8	16
	Inquiries	87.6	84.2	17

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)	10.9	1.9	1.7	3.3
Mean (average)	9.5	2.9	2.7	4.9
Cases that started in December 2023	560	21	13	253
Weeks between start date & event date				
Median (average)	11.0	16.7	16.1	6.0
Mean (average)	14.3	20.5	18.5	8.7
Cases where an event occurred during December 2023	549	27	19	278
Weeks between event date & decision date				
Median (average)	4.4	4.4	6.3	2.9
Mean (average)	5.7	8.3	10.0	3.5
Cases that have been decided in December 2023	663	38	15	373

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

ANNEX C, Table a: s78 planning appeals received and decided, by quarter since 2018/19			
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	2,057
	Oct - Dec	2,656	2,606
	Jan - Mar	2,579	2,483
2023/24	Apr - Jun	2,459	2,148
	Jul - Sep	2,412	2,493
	Oct - Dec	2,557	2,478

ANNEX C, 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%	60%	29%
	Jul - Sep	26%	54%	65%	28%
	Oct - Dec	26%	50%	63%	28%
	Jan - Mar	28%	44%	66%	30%
2023/24	Apr - Jun	28%	41%	57%	30%
	Jul - Sep	27%	40%	39%	28%
	Oct - Dec	25%	47%	62%	27%

ANNEX C, 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	34	580
	Jul - Sep	484	61	31	576
	Oct - Dec	602	89	50	741
	Jan - Mar	637	66	42	745

2023/24	Apr - Jun	549	61	27	637
	Jul - Sep	615	55	27	697
	Oct - Dec	562	63	38	663

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).

Timeliness measures for all 12 months have been reproduced without Tree Preservation Order cases in this publication. This is due to problems with recorded validation dates, which mean that we are currently unable to accurately calculate their decision times.

Table	Revisions
Table 1	Events held: November 2023
Table 2	Received: November 2023
Table 2	Closed: November 2023
Table 2	Open Cases: October and November 2023
Table 6	Valid to decision mean weeks: hearings November 2023
Table 6	Valid to decision mean weeks: inquiries November 2023
Table 6	Standard Deviation: inquiries November 2023
Table 7	Specialist cases: Valid to decision median weeks: October 2023
Table 7	Specialist cases: Valid to decision mean weeks November 2023
Table 7	Specialist cases: Standard deviation November 2023
Annex A Planning	Median weeks: Hearings November 2023
Annex A Planning	Mean weeks: Hearings November 2023
Annex A Planning	Standard Deviation: Hearings November 2023
Annex A Enforcement	Median weeks: Written Representations September 2023
Annex A Specialist	Median weeks: Written Representations October 2023
Annex A Specialist	Mean weeks: Written Representations June 2023
Annex A Specialist	Standard Deviation: Written Representations October 2023
Annex A Specialist	Median weeks: Inquiries November 2023

Annex A Specialist	Mean weeks: Inquiries November 2023
Annex A Specialist	Standard Deviation: Inquiries November 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. Note that not all decimal values are possible where converting days to weeks. 1 day is 1/7 of a week, or 0.14 weeks (to two decimal places). 2 days = 0.29; 3 days = 0.43; 4 days = 0.57; 5 days = 0.71; 6 days = 0.86.</p> <p>When these are used to calculate averages, or displayed to one decimal place, the result will not equate to a full day which can be misleading: it may appear that we are measuring part days (e.g. 19.8 weeks) but we only measure in whole days.</p>

Glossary

Term	Explanation
Appeals	The right to appeal a planning decision made by a local authority is a key feature of the planning system, as is appealing when an authority is taking too long.
Appeals decided	Number of appeals by the date the appeal was decided by The Planning Inspectorate.

Term	Explanation
Appeals received	Number of appeals by the date the appeal was received by The Planning Inspectorate.
Applications	Planning Inspectorate manage the application process for proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within England and Wales in line with the 2008 Planning Act.
Closed	The total number of appeals decided, withdrawn, or turned away.
Decision	The outcome of the case e.g. appeal allowed or rejected. The date of the decision is taken as the date a decision letter is sent to the appellant.
Event	A site visit, hearing, or inquiry (may be virtual)
Event Type	The different options of how an Inspector visits a site for a written representations appeal.
Examinations	The process of examining local plans is dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate. Every Local Planning Authority is required to have a local plan. This includes a vision for the future and plan to address housing needs in the area. When a Local Planning Authority has finished preparing and consulting on a local plan it must be submitted to the Secretary of State who appoints an Inspector to carry out an independent examination.
FTE	Full Time Equivalent – a count of employees where those working part time are counted in proportion with their contracted hours.
Headcount	Total number of staff employed regardless of how many hours they work (i.e. the number of different individuals).
Hearings	A hearing involves the submission of written evidence by the main parties and a hearing once all the written submissions have been received. This takes the form of a round-the-table discussion (in person or virtually) that will be led by the planning inspector. It allows for all parties to respond to any questions that the inspector might have, and to let everyone make their case known. Source: Planning Portal
Inquiries	An inquiry is usually used for complex cases where legal issues may need to be considered. The main parties will usually have legal representatives to present their case and to cross-examine any witnesses. Prior to the inquiry date, the Planning Inspectorate will expect to have received various documents from all parties that will be taking part in the appeal. These may include statements of case and proofs of evidence from expert witnesses. Third parties may also take part. The inquiry will be led by the inspector and will follow a formal procedure. At some point during or on conclusion of the inquiry the inspector and the main parties will undertake a site visit. Source: Planning Portal
Live appeals	Number of live appeals in that have an appeal valid date but no end date (either decision date or a closed date, e.g. for appeals that have been withdrawn).
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.

Term	Explanation
Median	This is the time taken by the 'middle' case if all cases were sorted from quickest to longest
Open Cases	Number of cases that have been received but on which a decision has not yet been made/ issued. Will differ from Live Appeals as it includes those received but not yet verified.
Procedure Type	The method by which The Planning Inspectorate processes and decides appeals.
Standard deviation	This is a measure of variability or spread. It is calculated by examining how much each value differs from the mean. A higher standard deviation means the individual decision times vary more widely around the mean.
Written Representations (includes Rights of Way Schedule 14)	Most planning appeals are decided by the written representations' procedure. With this procedure the Inspector considers written evidence from the appellant, the LPA and anyone else who has an interest in the appeal. The site is also likely to be visited.

Contact Us

The Planning Inspectorate welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

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

Public enquiries email statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Please note we are currently reviewing our statistics with a view to making them as clear and helpful as possible for users. We would be delighted if you could contact us via the address below with any views on this approach; particularly on what content would be most useful and why.

email statistics@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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