



The Planning Inspectorate

Official Statistics
25th April 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 April 2023 to March 2024
- 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 March was 28 weeks.

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

Procedure type	Last 12 months	March 2024
Written Representations	30 weeks	27 weeks
Hearings	34 weeks	27 weeks
Inquiries	43 weeks	48 weeks
All Cases	30 weeks	28 weeks

The median time for planning cases was 26 weeks in March 2024. The 12 month median was 29 weeks.

Enforcement decisions made in March 2024 had a median decision time of 62 weeks, with the 12 month median being 53 weeks.

The median time for planning appeals decided by inquiry under the Rosewell Process in March was 25 weeks and over the 12 months to March 2024 was 30 weeks.

Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate made 18,134 appeal decisions¹ in the last 12 months, an average of 1,511 per month. The number of decisions in March 2024 was 1,452.

There were 1,333 written representations decisions in March 2024 and 16,910 in the last 12 months.

There were 769 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, and during March 2024, 79 decisions were issued.

There were 455 decisions made on inquiries during the last 12 months, with 40 in March 2024.

Planning Inspectors

There were 434 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate at the end of March 2024.

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

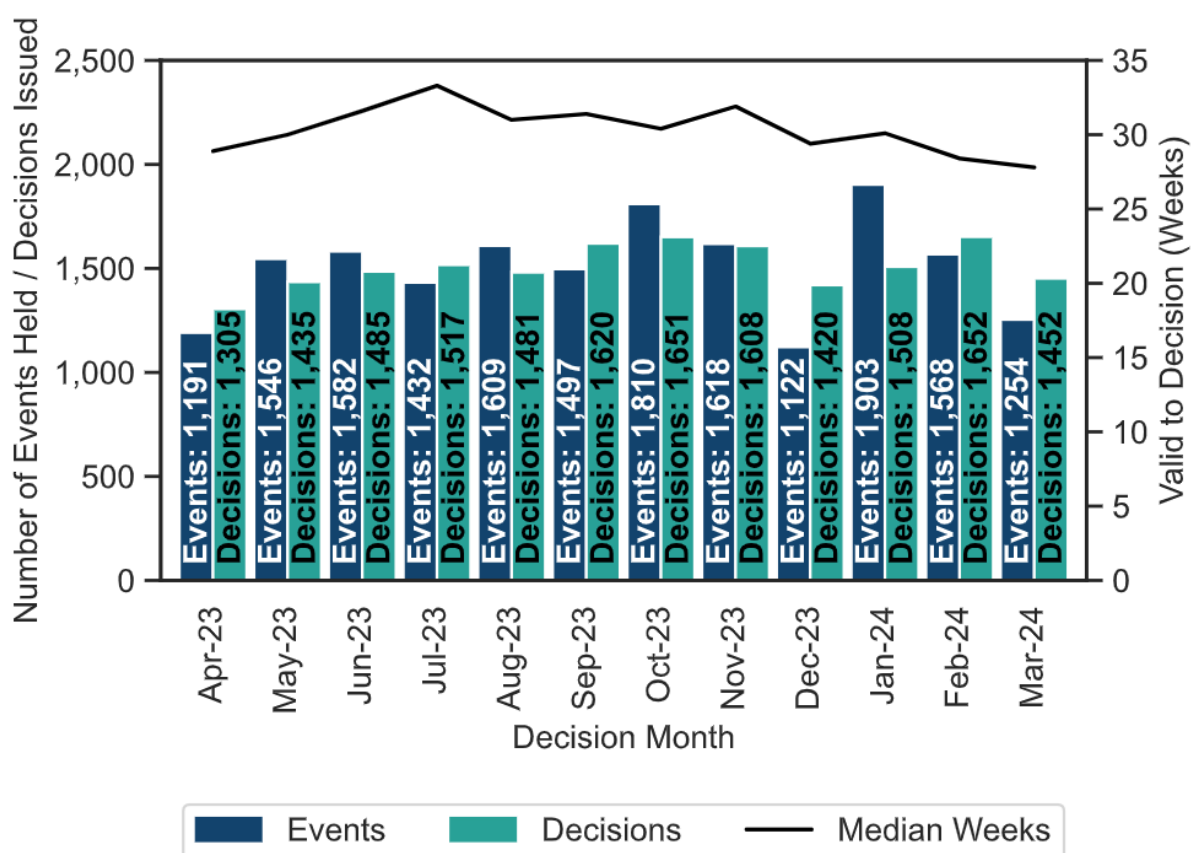
The number of decisions issued in March 2024 was 1,452, with a monthly average of 1,511 over the past 12 months.

The number of events recorded for March 2024 was 1,254, the average over the past 12 months was 1,511.

The median valid to decision time was 28 weeks in March 2024, as seen in Figure 1 and Table 1 below. The median valid to decision time has fallen slightly (0.6 weeks lower than February).

There are no clear trends for the number of events and decisions per month. However, the Christmas and Easter breaks do typically 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; April 2023 to March 2024.



Source: Horizon

Table 1: Number of events held, decisions issued and median time between valid date & decision date; April 2023 to March 2024.

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

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Events Held	1191	1546	1582	1432	1609	1497	1810	1618	1122	1903	1568	1254	18132
Decisions	1305	1435	1485	1517	1481	1620	1651	1608	1420	1508	1652	1452	18134
Median	28.9	30	31.6	33.3	31	31.4	30.4	31.9	29.4	30.1	28.4	27.8	30.4

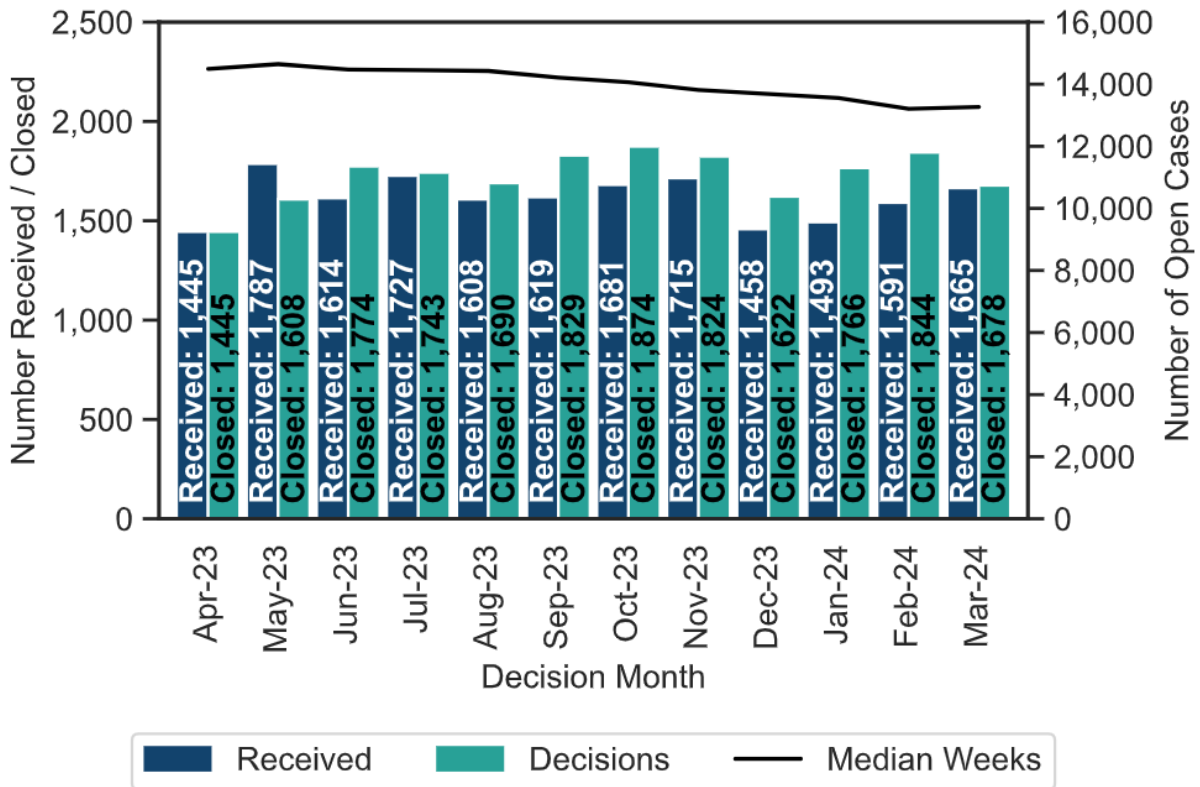
Source: Horizon

² A site visit, hearing, or inquiry.

Figure 2 below shows the number of cases received, closed and open for each of the last 12 months. The number of cases closed has exceeded the number of cases received for each of the past 10 months.

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; April 2023 to March 2024.



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; April 2023 to March 2024.

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

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Received	1445	1787	1614	1727	1608	1619	1681	1715	1458	1493	1591	1665	19403
Closed	1445	1608	1774	1743	1690	1829	1874	1824	1622	1766	1844	1678	20697
Open	14493	14645	14473	14455	14427	14210	14062	13814	13682	13551	13203	13264	

Source: Horizon

Number of Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate has made 18,134 appeal decisions³ in the last 12 months. There were 1,452 cases decided in March 2024.

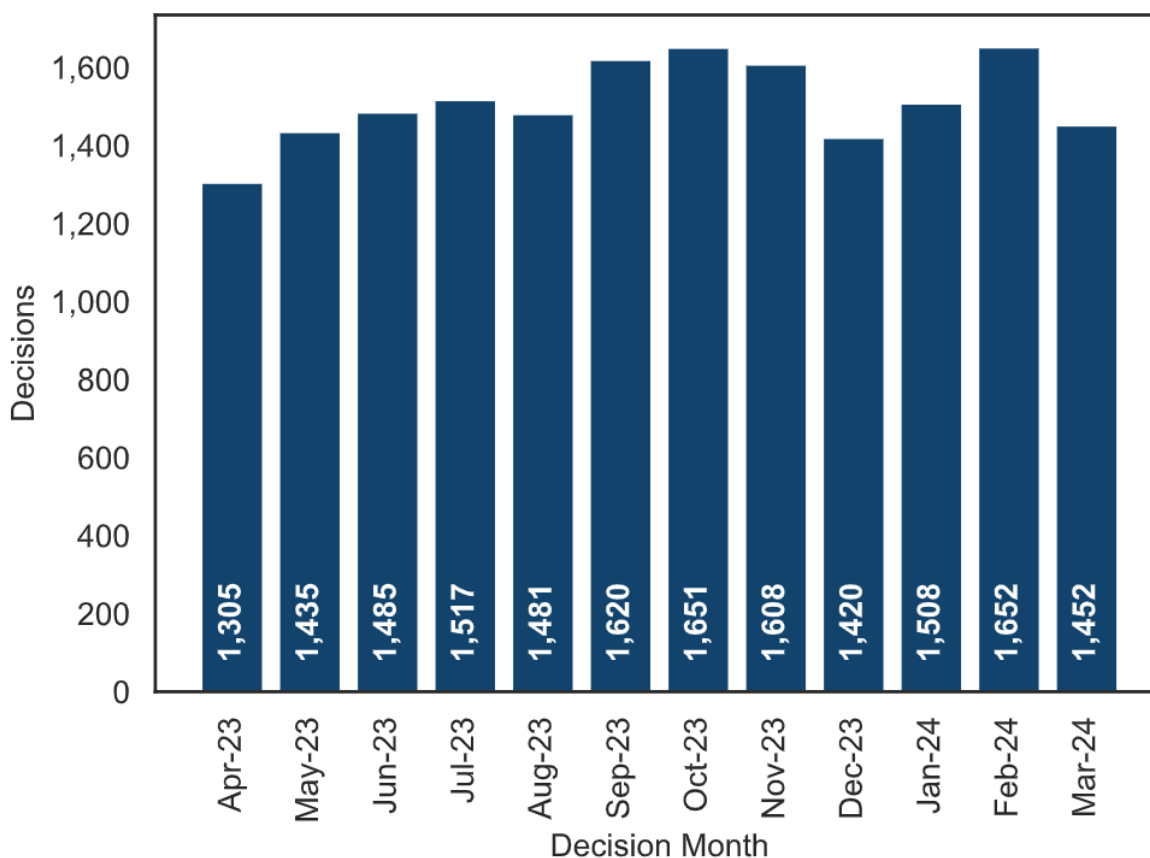
Table 3 below shows the monthly breakdown with the highest number of decisions in February and lowest in April.

Table 3: Appeal Decisions; April 2023 to March 2024.

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Decisions	1305	1435	1485	1517	1481	1620	1651	1608	1420	1508	1652	1452	18134

Source: Horizon

Figure 3 – Appeal Decisions; April 2023 to March 2024.



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.

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)

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 (16,910) were made on written representations. This is 93% of all appeal decisions made. Table 4 shows that written representation decisions have varied from around 1,220 to around 1,560 per month over the past 12 months. There were 1,333 decisions in March 2024.

There were 769 decisions made on hearings during the last 12 months, the monthly average being 64. During March 2024, 79 decisions were issued. In March 2024, 40 decisions were made for inquiries. Decisions for inquiries per month over the last 12 months have ranged between 28 and 49.

Table 4: Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; April 2023 to March 2024.

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Written Representations	1220	1307	1397	1418	1390	1516	1557	1493	1313	1407	1559	1333	16910
Hearings	57	89	59	65	63	58	54	66	64	66	49	79	769
Inquiries	28	39	29	34	28	46	40	49	43	35	44	40	455
Total	1305	1435	1485	1517	1481	1620	1651	1608	1420	1508	1652	1452	18134

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Planning	1110	1187	1256	1257	1256	1339	1402	1338	1211	1246	1409	1136	15147
Enforcement	138	149	166	208	192	224	187	228	151	206	207	175	2231
Specialist	57	99	63	52	33	57	62	42	58	56	36	141	756
Total	1305	1435	1485	1517	1481	1620	1651	1608	1420	1508	1652	1452	18134

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.

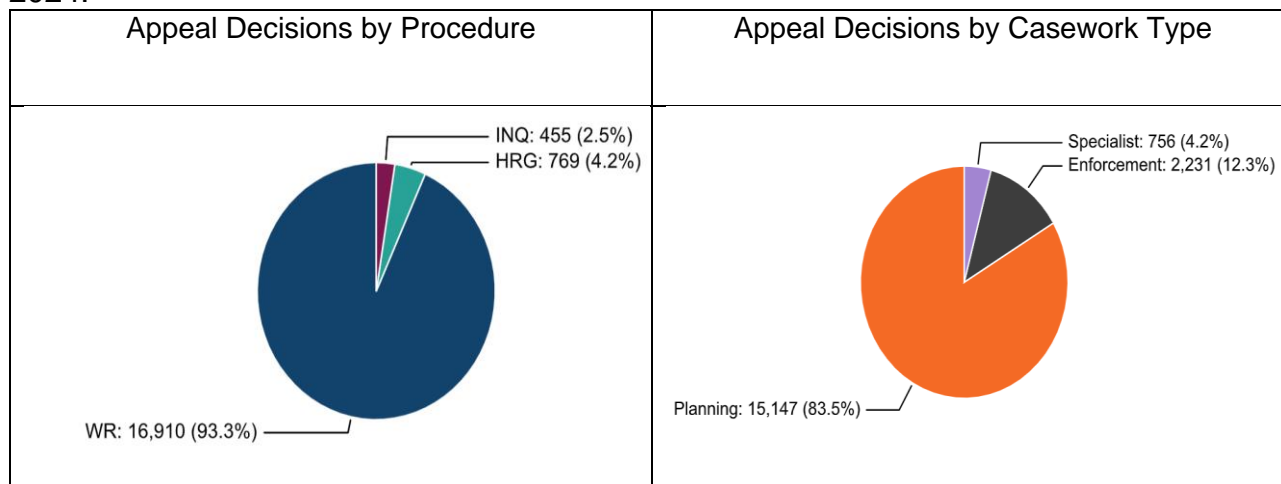
What are Enforcement cases? Enforcement covers enforcement appeals (i.e., appeals against the issue of an enforcement notice served by a local planning authority for alleged breaches of planning control), enforcement listed building notice appeals and lawful development certificate appeals.

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 (15,147). This is about 84% of all appeal decisions made. There were 2,231 enforcement decisions and 756 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 186. Specialist casework figures continue to vary each month, from a high of 141 in March 2024 to a low of 33 in August 2023.

Figure 4 – Appeal Decisions by Procedure and Casework Category; April 2023 to March 2024.



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 30 weeks; and 28 weeks for March 2024. 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 35 weeks. Each month the median is less than the mean, due to the impact of very long cases. Also included in the table is the *standard deviation* of decision timeliness, which is a measure of variation.

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

Median	This is the time taken by the 'middle' case if all cases were sorted from quickest to longest
Standard deviation	This is a measure of variability or spread. It is calculated by examining how much each value differs from the mean. A higher standard deviation means the individual decision times vary more widely around the mean. A lower standard deviation would demonstrate greater consistency in the Planning Inspectorate's decision timeliness.

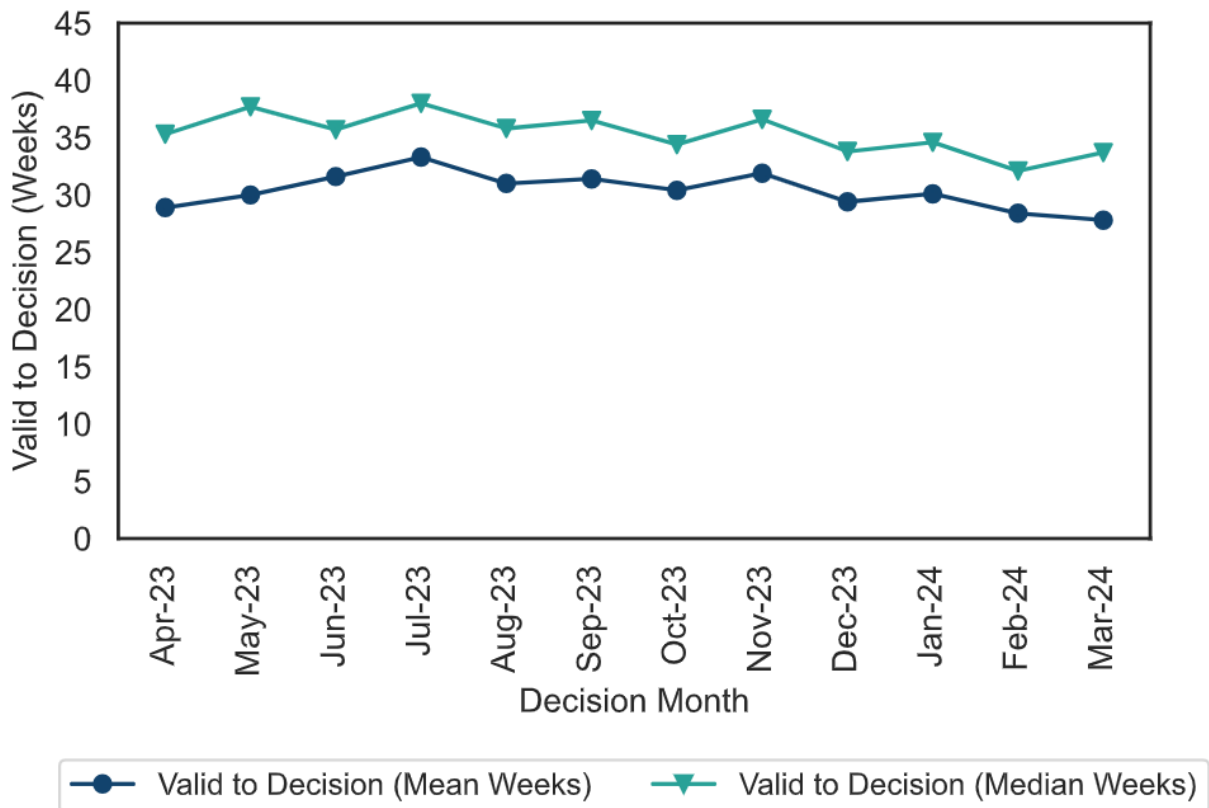
Table 5: Median, mean and Standard Deviation of Time to Decision; April 2023 to March 2024.

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	28.9	30	31.6	33.3	31	31.4	30.4	31.9	29.4	30.1	28.4	27.8	30.4
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	35.3	37.7	35.7	38	35.8	36.5	34.4	36.6	33.8	34.6	32.1	33.7	35.3
Standard Deviation (weeks)	22.5	27.8	20.4	21.9	20.8	21.5	18.8	20.7	19.8	20.3	18.7	21.5	21.3

Source: Horizon

Figure 5: Median and mean Time to Decision; April 2023 to March 2024.

Note: Specialist casework timeliness measures exclude Tree Preservation Order cases



Source: Horizon

Procedure Type

Table 6 below shows decision timeliness broken down by the procedure type. Hearings and inquiries have typically taken longer than written representations⁵, however, written representations and hearings had more similar median decision times over the second half of 2023. 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 March 2024 is 30 weeks. The median time for hearings over the 12 months to March 2024 is 34 weeks. The median time to decide for inquiries over the 12 months to March 2024 was 43 weeks.

Table 6: Mean and Median Time to Decision, with Standard Deviation, by Procedure; April 2023 to March 2024.

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	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Valid to Decision (median weeks)	WR	28.1	29.6	31.4	33.3	31	31.2	30.4	31.7	29.3	30	28.1	27.4	30.1
	HRG	35.1	56.6	33.6	32.9	29.6	32	28.1	32.1	33.6	39	38.3	27.4	33.6
	INQ	79.1	41	33.7	43.6	29.5	61.9	39.4	41	53	40.4	37.1	47.5	42.9
	All	28.9	30	31.6	33.3	31	31.4	30.4	31.9	29.4	30.1	28.4	27.8	30.4
Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	WR	33.6	34.3	34.9	36.9	34.8	35.3	34	35.7	32.3	33.3	31.1	32.1	34
	HRG	49.4	70.6	44.4	52.1	49	47.2	43	43.1	45.4	51.4	44.9	44.9	49.7
	INQ	79.6	72.4	56.2	56.4	56.1	63.6	39.3	56.4	59.6	55.6	54.8	61	58.9
	All	35.3	37.7	35.7	38	35.8	36.5	34.4	36.6	33.8	34.6	32.1	33.7	35.3
Standard Deviation (weeks)	WR	20.1	20.5	19	20	18	19.5	18.1	19.1	17.2	17.7	16.6	18.9	18.8
	HRG	30.2	53.2	29.4	37.2	40.1	36.6	34.2	27.1	30.4	39.7	26.1	34	37.4
	INQ	40.7	57.5	40.1	35.6	47.6	32.9	15.5	37.7	40.7	34.5	41.9	38.6	40.5
	All	22.5	27.8	20.4	21.9	20.8	21.5	18.8	20.7	19.8	20.3	18.7	21.5	21.3
Decisions	WR	1220	1307	1397	1418	1390	1516	1557	1493	1313	1407	1559	1333	16910
	HRG	57	89	59	65	63	58	54	66	64	66	49	79	769
	INQ	28	39	29	34	28	46	40	49	43	35	44	40	455
	All	1305	1435	1485	1517	1481	1620	1651	1608	1420	1508	1652	1452	18134

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 inquiries 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; April 2023 to March 2024.

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

Casework Category	Measure	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Planning Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	26.6	28.7	29.9	31.6	29	29.9	29.3	29.9	27.9	29	26.9	26.1	28.7
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	32.1	33.3	32.5	34.9	32.7	33.3	32	32.5	30.2	30.6	28.5	28.7	31.8
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	20	22.3	17.4	19.8	17.4	18.7	16.7	16.5	15.6	14.6	13.5	14.3	17.4
Enforcement Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	57.9	58.4	53.1	53.1	49.9	50	48.3	57.7	56.3	48.6	50.7	62	53.4
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	60.5	68.8	55.7	53.4	54.4	55	51.7	57.6	57.7	54.6	53.9	65.1	56.9
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	26.4	41	21.1	22.3	26.5	24.7	23	22.6	25.3	30.1	27.4	29.7	27.2
Specialist Cases	Valid to Decision (median weeks)	34.6	44.9	35.7	50.4	34.6	36.4	35.1	51.7	44.9	49.1	46.3	25	38
	Valid to Decision (mean weeks)	36.7	49.7	50.2	56.2	45	43.3	41.9	57.9	50.8	53.3	52.3	35	47
	St. dev. of decision (weeks)	20	32.4	37.8	36.9	37.5	32.7	26.9	42.3	33.4	32	31.2	26.7	33.6

Source: Horizon

Note: Specialist casework timeliness measures exclude Tree Preservation Order cases

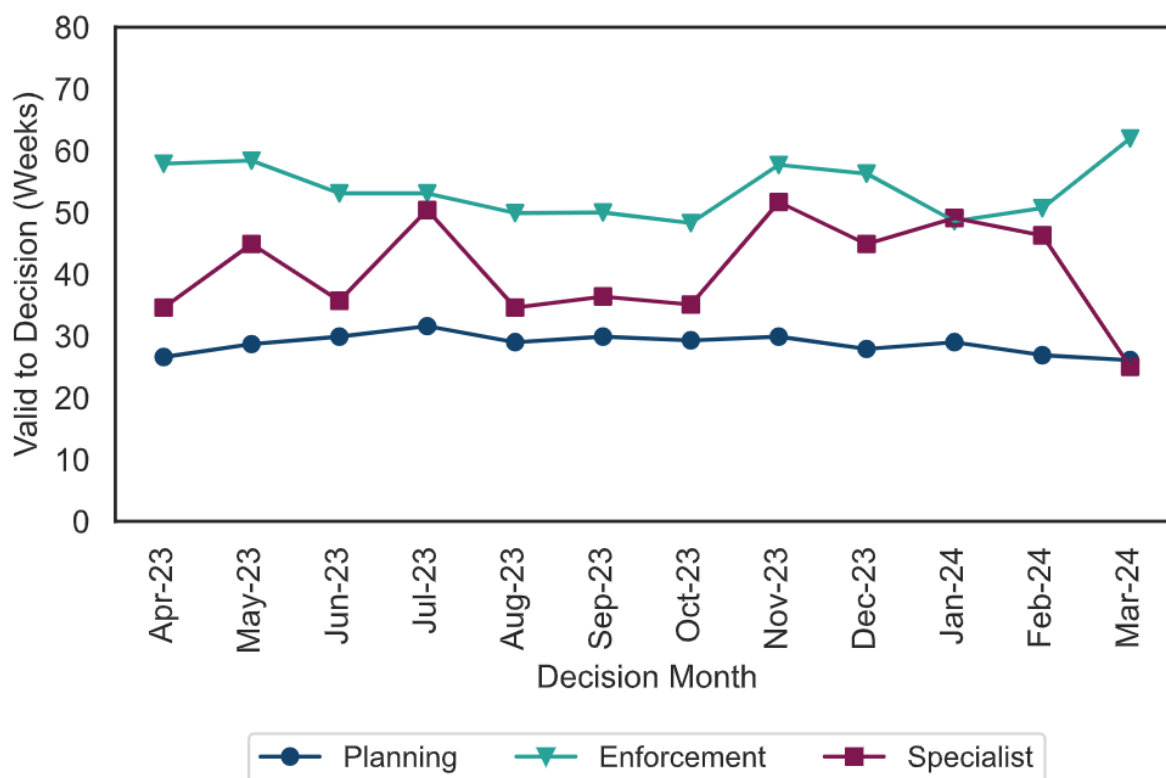
Annex A gives information on median and mean time to decision, with standard deviation, for the three procedure types, split by planning, enforcement, and specialist casework categories.

Enforcement decisions made in the past 12 months had a median decision time of 53 weeks.

There are considerably fewer specialist cases which means results are more liable to be distorted by extreme values.

Figure 6 – Median Time to Decision by Casework Category: April 2023 to March 2024^P.

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



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 March 2024 is 30 weeks and the median time to decision for March 2024 was 25 weeks.

Table 8: Decisions, Mean and Median Time to Decision, Planning Inquiry Cases under Rosewell Process; April 2023 to March 2024.

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

Measure	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Decisions	9	19	17	15	20	32	16	24	21	15	16	15	219
Median (weeks)	24.9	28.7	30	24.9	26.1	61.9	37.1	26.2	29.1	35	31.9	25.3	29.7
Mean (weeks)	34.9	30.7	34.3	30	33.9	47.1	35.2	31.6	44.2	36	31.2	27.2	35.7
St. Dev. (weeks)	20.2	9.1	25.8	12.2	17	16.2	9	11.7	23	9.3	7.9	7	16.6

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.

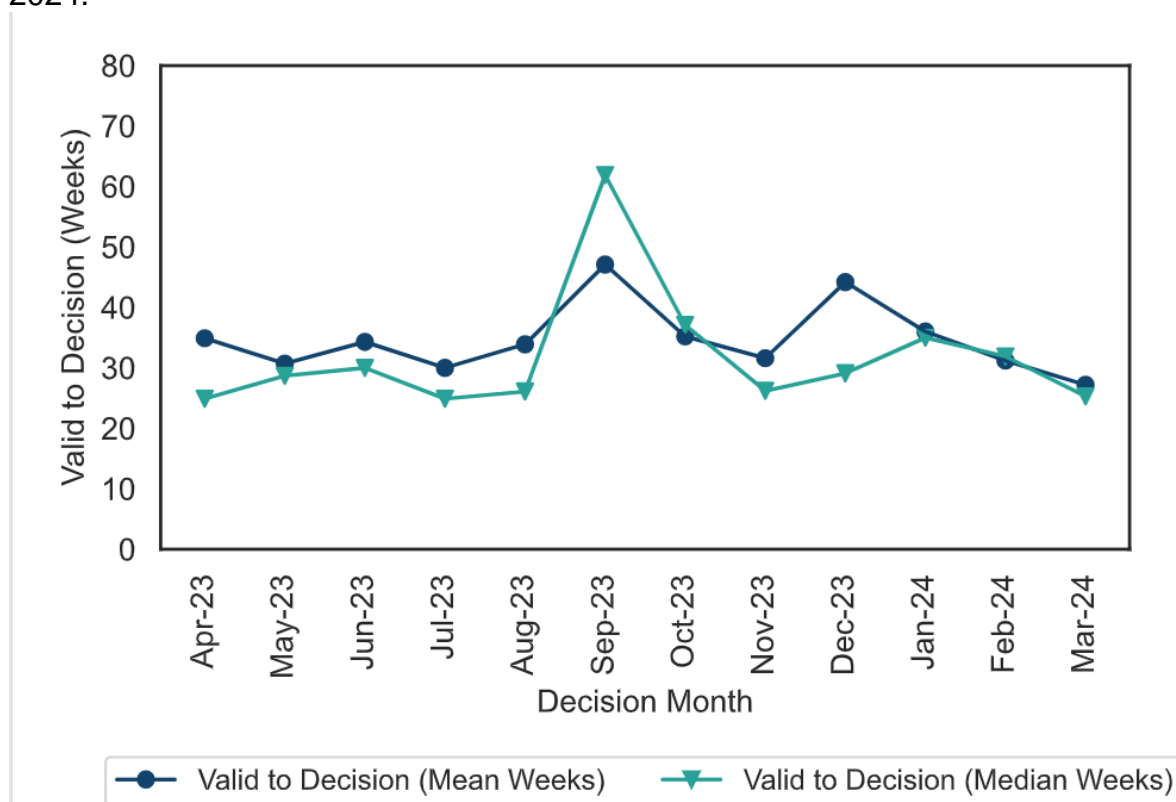
Table 9: Decisions, Planning Inquiry Cases under non-Rosewell Process; April 2023 to March 2024.

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Decisions	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	3	0	4	2	17

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; April 2023 to March 2024.



Source: Horizon

Open Cases

At the end of March 2024, the Planning Inspectorate had 13,219 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 11,829 cases being handled through written representations; 874 through hearings; and 516 through inquiries, as well as 45 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 March 2024

Stage	WR	HRG	INQ	Total
Case received but yet to be deemed valid	535	40	7	582
Case deemed valid but yet to “start” [Note 1]	2,982	193	131	3,306
Case started but decision not yet issued	8,312	641	378	9,331
Total	11,829	874	516	13,219

Source: Horizon

Note 1 - there are 45 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 April 2023 to March 2024⁹. 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 434 Planning Inspectors employed by the Inspectorate in March 2024 – with a full-time equivalent of 391.

Table 11: Planning Inspectors – Headcount and FTE; April 2023 to March 2024. (at end of month)

Month	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
Headcount	422	422	428	439	437	432	430	428	426	424	426	434
FTE	378	379	384	394	393	388	386	385	384	382	383	391

Source: SAP HR and Employee Central

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

⁹ Data as at the last day of the month.

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.

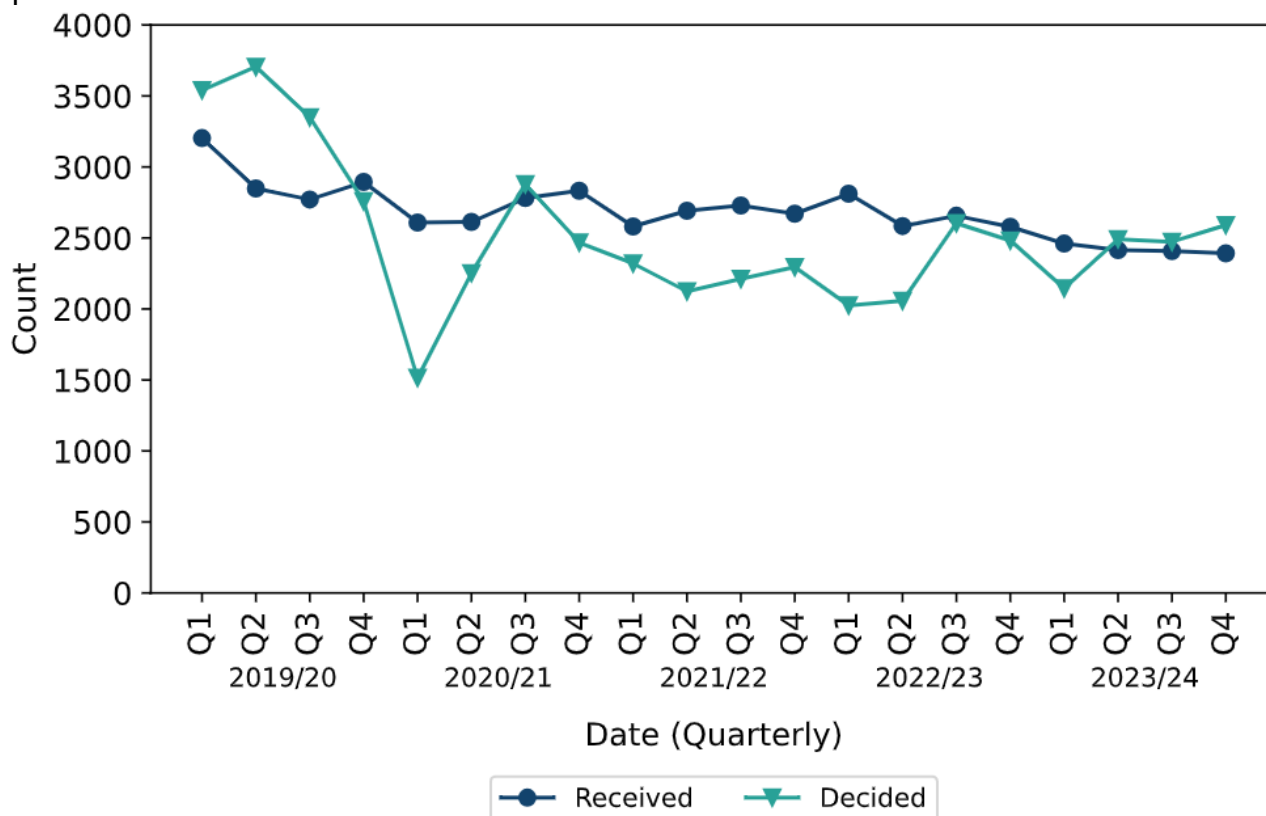
Number of appeals received compared to decisions issued.

In the last twelve months, April 2023 to March 2024, there have been 9,674 Section 78 planning appeals (s78) received, 9.0% lower than for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

In the last five financial years (April 2019 to March 2024) 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 2,419 and the average number of decisions per quarter was 2,425.

The number of appeals received in January to March 2024 (2,392) was 7.3% lower than the same period in 2023. Appeal receipts since the pandemic started average 2,613 per quarter (April 20 to March 24). 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, 2019/20 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.

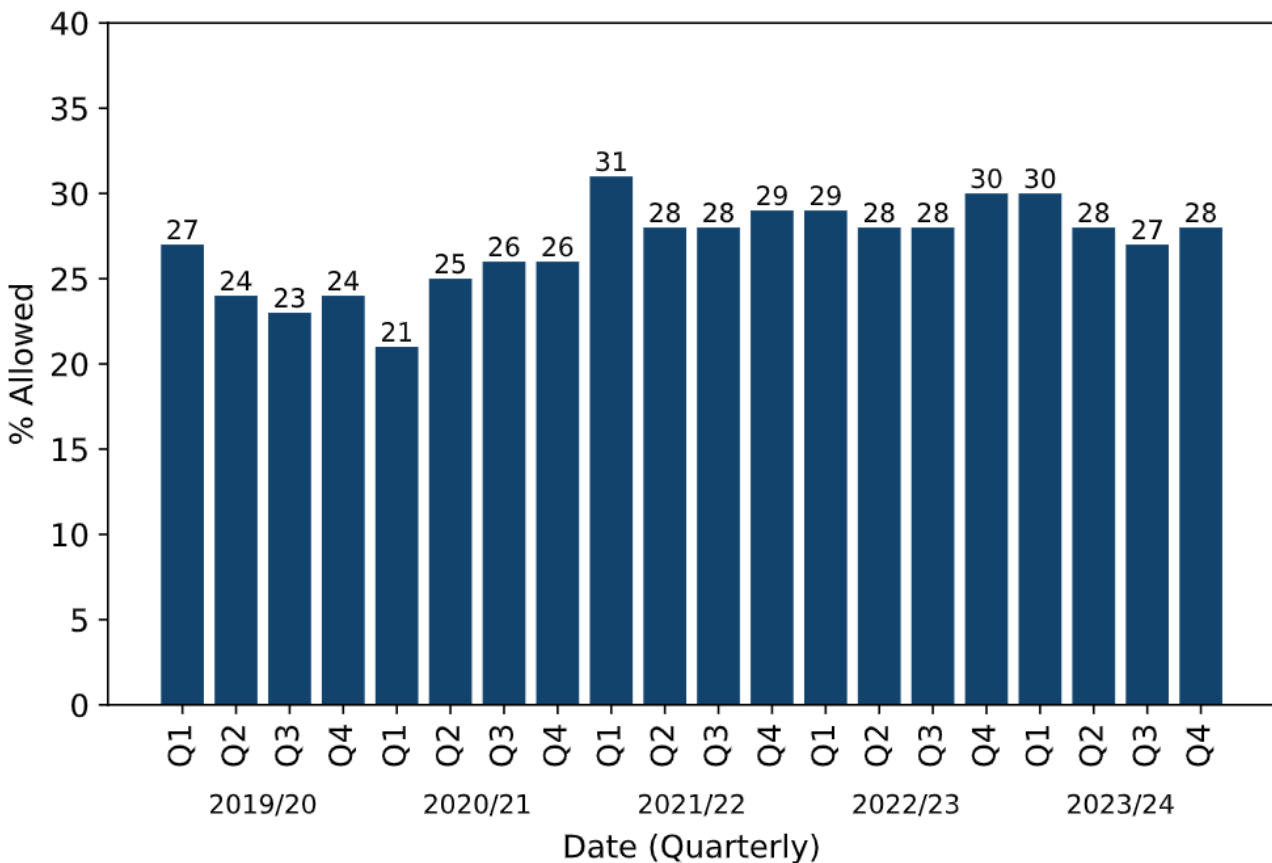
The number of decisions issued in January to March 2024, was 4.8% higher than the previous quarter and 4.4% higher than the corresponding quarter last year.

Appeals Allowed

The percentage of Section 78 planning appeals that were allowed in the latest quarter was 28%, a slight rise from 27% in the previous quarter (see figure 9). There were 733 appeals allowed between January and March 2024, 70 less than in the previous quarter. (see Figure 11).

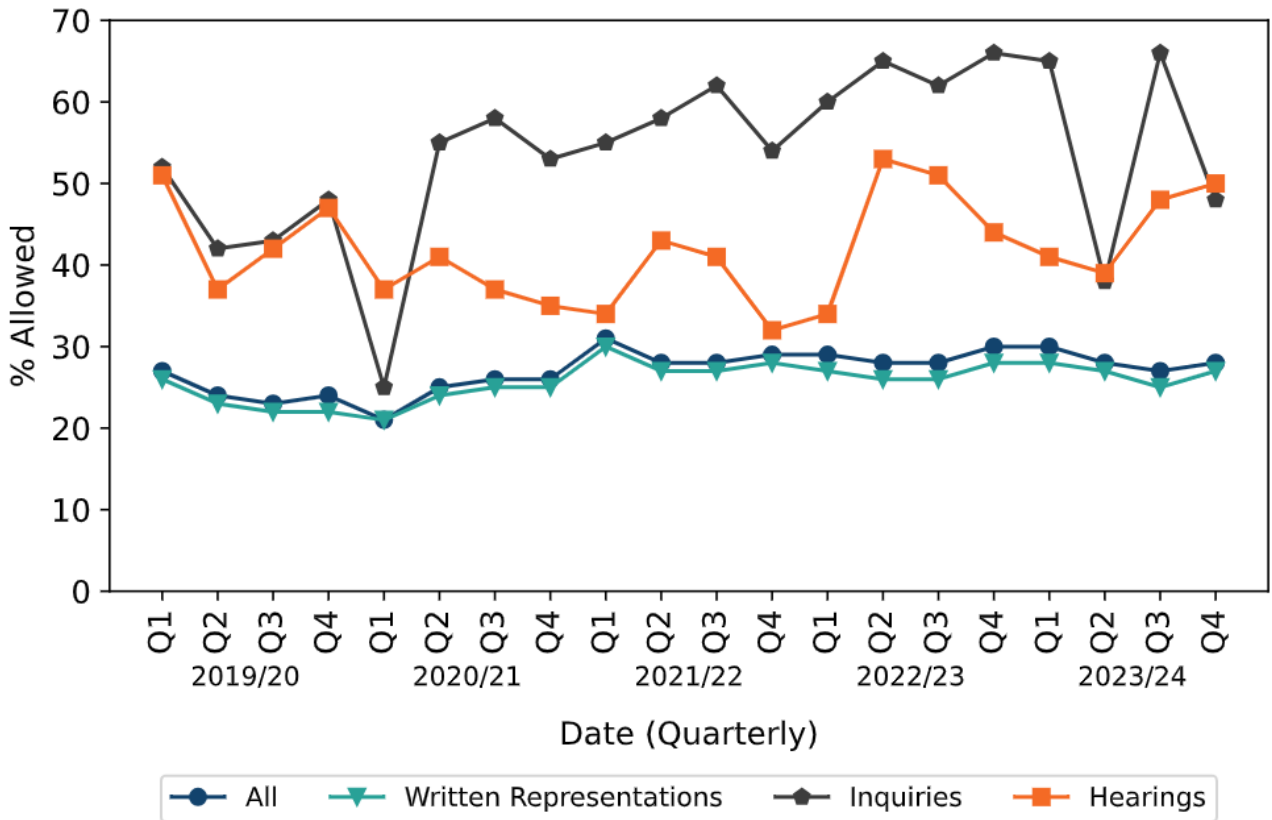
The consistency in the overall percentage allowed is heavily influenced by the number of written representations appeals allowed, as this procedure type contributes by far the greatest number of decisions each year. There has been slightly more variation in the percentage allowed for hearings and inquiries.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

Figure 9: S78 planning appeals, percentage allowed, 2019/20 to 2023/24, by quarter



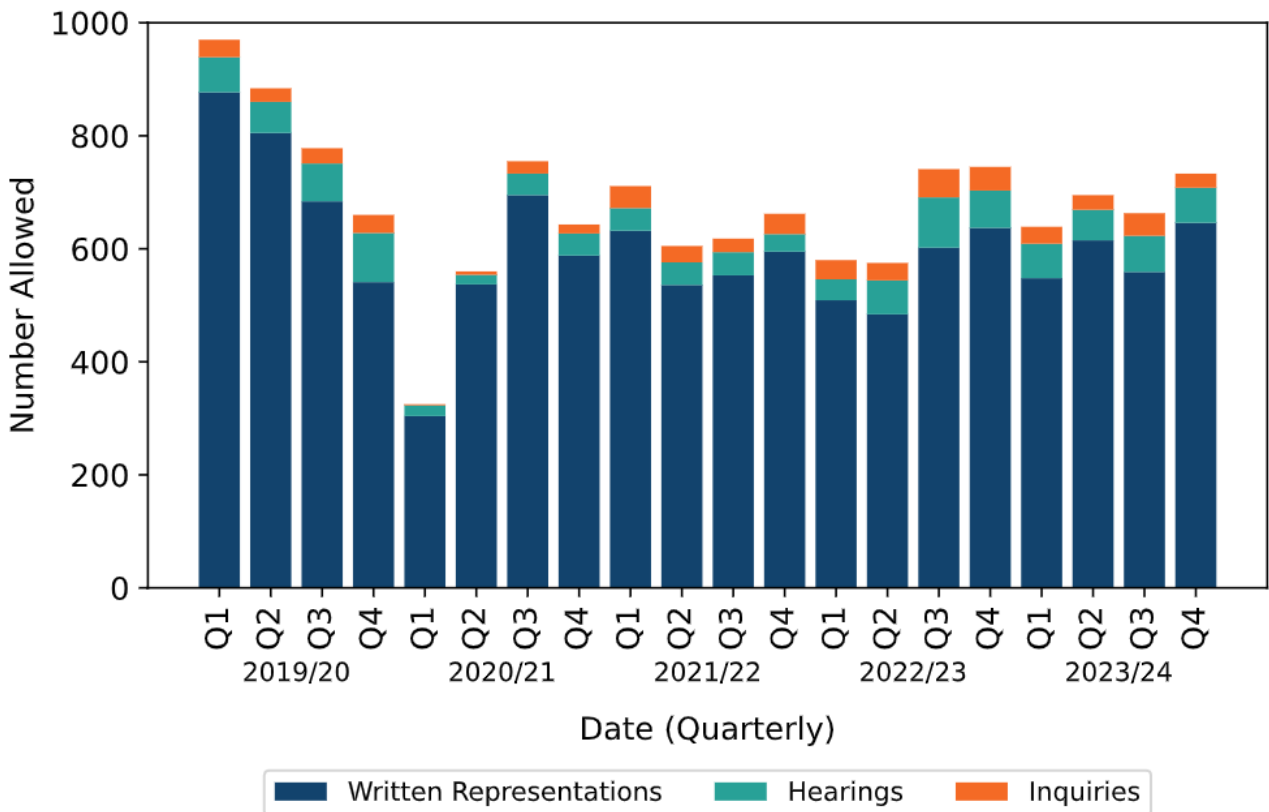
Source: Horizon & Picaso. Full published data in Table 2.4 s78 planning appeals decided. See Annex C Table B, for full data table

Figure 10: S78 planning appeals, percentage allowed by procedure type, 2019/20 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, 2019/20 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

Annual Statistics

For some low volume casework types the Inspectorate publishes the number of cases received and decided annually. We also publish annually the number of appeals decided and allowed by Local Planning Authority and by Decision Maker.

In 2023/24 there were significant increases in the number of Lawful Development Certificate cases received (compared to 2022/23) and significant decreases in the number of Advert cases received (compared to 2022/23). (See published tables 2.7, 2.8, 3.3 and 4.1 for full details.)

The Local Planning Authorities with the highest number of planning appeals (s78 & HAS) decided in 2023/24 were London Borough (LB) of Croydon (269), LB Bromley (212), LB Barnet (202), Cornwall (180) and Leeds City (173). The Local Planning Authority with the highest number of Enforcement appeals decided in 2023/24 was LB Brent (57) followed by LB Barnet (47) and LB Havering (38). (See published tables 5.1a – 5.1f for full details.)

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, May, June, July and October 2023 and January and March 2024 for inquiries decisions.

Procedure	Measure	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	1059	1106	1187	1191	1186	1264	1344	1268	1141	1191	1353	1067	14357
	Median Average Weeks	26.6	28.3	29.9	31.9	29.1	29.7	29.3	30	27.9	28.9	26.9	26.4	28.7
	Mean Average Weeks	31.4	31.8	32	34.2	32.2	32.7	31.7	32.5	29.6	30.2	28.1	28.5	31.2
	Standard Deviation	18.7	18.2	16.4	18.1	15.7	17.8	15.8	16.4	14.4	13.8	12.8	13.6	16.1
Hearings	Decisions	39	62	52	49	50	42	42	44	46	40	36	52	554
	Median Average Weeks	27	40.2	31.5	25.4	26.3	25.1	25	25.4	24	29	29.7	23.4	26.4
	Mean Average Weeks	42.7	61.4	42.9	50.7	43.4	38	39.5	31.4	38.2	39.5	35.5	31.2	41.9
	Standard Deviation	30.6	52.9	29.5	40.5	39.3	31.7	35	15.8	28.6	29.2	17.7	21.5	34.7
Inquiries	Decisions	12	19	17	17	20	33	16	26	24	15	20	17	236
	Median Average Weeks	28.8	28.7	30	27.7	26.1	61.9	37.1	26.2	31.1	35	33.6	26	30.2
	Mean Average Weeks	56.6	30.7	34.3	36.1	33.9	50.2	35.2	34.4	45.4	36	38.5	34.9	39.2
	Standard Deviation	43.9	9.1	25.8	20.4	17	23.7	9	19.9	24	9.3	31.4	22	23.9
All Planning Cases	Decisions	1110	1187	1256	1257	1256	1339	1402	1338	1211	1246	1409	1136	15147
	Median Average Weeks	26.6	28.7	29.9	31.6	29	29.9	29.3	29.9	27.9	29	26.9	26.1	28.7
	Mean Average Weeks	32.1	33.3	32.5	34.9	32.7	33.3	32	32.5	30.2	30.6	28.5	28.7	31.8
	Standard Deviation	20	22.3	17.4	19.8	17.4	18.7	16.7	16.5	15.6	14.6	13.5	14.3	17.4

Enforcement

Note: where there are fewer than 20 decisions, the measures mean, median and standard deviation are less meaningful. This applies to all months for hearing other than May and November 2023 and January 2024 and all months for inquiry decisions other than October 2023 and February and March 2024.

Procedure	Measure	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	112	112	153	185	180	203	156	189	124	166	174	135	1889
	Median Average Weeks	53.6	56.7	52.9	51.9	48.2	47.6	49.4	55.3	54.5	46.1	48.9	58.6	51.9
	Mean Average Weeks	54.1	56.6	53.7	51.9	51.9	51	52.8	55.2	54.5	51.4	51.5	61.1	53.5
	Standard Deviation	21.9	24.5	17.3	21.3	22.3	19.7	22.9	19.9	19	24.6	23.3	25.4	22
Hearings	Decisions	12	23	6	11	9	12	11	22	15	23	11	19	174
	Median Average Weeks	69.9	78.9	50.5	34	58.3	71.5	61	63.8	62.3	69.7	60.9	71.7	66.4
	Mean Average Weeks	70.5	96.5	56.6	50.4	74.8	81.1	56.6	66.7	66.3	71.7	69.4	74.8	72
	Standard Deviation	17.8	48.9	25.1	24.8	40.6	36	27	29.5	26.2	48.1	28.4	37.8	38
Inquiries	Decisions	14	14	7	12	3	9	20	17	12	17	22	21	168
	Median Average Weeks	114.2	149.3	101.3	80.1	146.1	94.6	46.3	72.7	69.4	81	50.6	90.6	80.5
	Mean Average Weeks	103.3	120.8	98.2	78.6	146.1	110.2	40.3	73.3	80.5	63	65.2	82.2	80.1
	Standard Deviation	23.2	63.3	39.2	19.8	0	20.2	17	29.9	52.6	37.1	45.4	37.9	44.5
All Enforcement Cases	Decisions	138	149	166	208	192	224	187	228	151	206	207	175	2231
	Median Average Weeks	57.9	58.4	53.1	53.1	49.9	50	48.3	57.7	56.3	48.6	50.7	62	53.4
	Mean Average Weeks	60.5	68.8	55.7	53.4	54.4	55	51.7	57.6	57.7	54.6	53.9	65.1	56.9
	Standard Deviation	26.4	41	21.1	22.3	26.5	24.7	23	22.6	25.3	30.1	27.4	29.7	27.2

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	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Written Representations	Decisions	49	89	57	42	24	49	57	36	48	50	32	131	664
	Median Average Weeks	31.9	37.9	31.9	48.6	23.6	28.1	34	43.6	40.7	42.4	44.7	24.7	34.3
	Mean Average Weeks	34	42.1	47.7	50.9	31.6	40.4	40.6	49	45.7	48.9	46.6	31.8	41.9
	Standard Deviation	18.9	28.7	38.3	33.3	20.7	33.5	27.6	35	29.2	29.4	28.4	24	30.2
Hearings	Decisions	6	4	1	5	4	4	1	0	3	3	2	8	41
	Median Average Weeks	37.6	71.5	-	70.9	63.8	37.2	-	-	65.6	57.1	79.9	77.9	63.9
	Mean Average Weeks	52.6	64.4	-	70	61.9	37.2	-	-	65.6	57.1	79.9	82.1	65
	Standard Deviation	24.3	26.4	-	12.2	16.4	1.1	-	-	0	7.8	21.4	28.2	23.2
Inquiries	Decisions	2	6	5	5	5	4	4	6	7	3	2	2	51
	Median Average Weeks	51.9	97.5	68.3	42.7	65.9	59.9	47.1	93.6	78.4	113.6	101.9	60.3	68.7
	Mean Average Weeks	51.9	91.3	71.7	71.9	90.6	68.9	50.2	103.9	72.3	111.8	101.9	60.3	80.2
	Standard Deviation	3	23.6	23.9	58.4	59.4	21.9	20.7	46.6	43.1	16.6	1.2	10.1	41.5
All Specialist Cases	Decisions	57	99	63	52	33	57	62	42	58	56	36	141	756
	Median Average Weeks	34.6	44.9	35.7	50.4	34.6	36.4	35.1	51.7	44.9	49.1	46.3	25	38
	Mean Average Weeks	36.7	49.7	50.2	56.2	45	43.3	41.9	57.9	50.8	53.3	52.3	35	47
	Standard Deviation	20	32.4	37.8	36.9	37.5	32.7	26.9	42.3	33.4	32	31.2	26.7	33.6

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 (March 2024)

The information below is published today on the number and length of decisions made in March 2024¹⁰:

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	29.4	31.8	710
	Hearings	23.4	31.3	50
	Inquiries	26	34.9	17
Householder appeals	Written Representations	18	19.7	299
Enforcement appeals	Written Representations	58.6	61.1	135
	Hearings	71.7	74.8	19
	Inquiries	90.6	82.2	21

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)	8.9	2.6	2.1	3.3
Mean (average)	8.6	8.1	11	4.3
Cases that started in March 2024	1070	45	15	357
Weeks between start date & event date				
Median (average)	12.9	16.6	16.1	6.3
Mean (average)	14.5	29.7	22.5	8.3
Cases where an event occurred during March 2024	574	39	15	354
Weeks between event date & decision date				
Median (average)	4	4.1	7.3	2.4
Mean (average)	5.6	5.6	9.2	3.9
Cases that have been decided in March 2024	710	50	17	299

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

Explanation of date terminology

Valid date	When a case is deemed to have been validly received. Note – this is not always the date the case was validated. If a case is validated
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¹⁰ Also published on gov.uk here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeals-average-timescales-for-arranging-inquiries-and-hearings>

	after the date it was validly received, it is the date it was validly received that is the valid date.
Start date	When a timetable, on how the appeal will progress, is issued to both the appellant and local authority. This timetable tells the appellant when to submit the information the Inspectors need to determine the appeal. It also tells the local authority when to notify interested parties about the appeal.
Event date	When the site visit, hearing, or inquiry occurred.
Decision date	When the decision was issued by The Planning Inspectorate.

Find out more about the process here - <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision/after-you-appeal>

Annex C – Quarterly Tables

Year	Quarter	received	decided
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	2,656	2,604
	Jan - Mar	2,579	2,482
2023/24	Apr - Jun	2,460	2,145
	Jul - Sep	2,414	2,490
	Oct - Dec	2,408	2,473
	Jan - Mar	2,392	2,591

Year	Quarter	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	All
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%	53%	65%	28%
	Oct - Dec	26%	51%	63%	28%
	Jan - Mar	28%	44%	66%	30%
2023/24	Apr - Jun	28%	41%	65%	30%
	Jul - Sep	27%	39%	38%	28%
	Oct - Dec	25%	48%	66%	27%
	Jan - Mar	27%	50%	48%	28%

ANNEX C, Table c: s78 planning appeals, number allowed by procedure type, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Year	Quarter	Written Representations	Hearings	Inquiries	All
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	60	31	575
	Oct - Dec	602	89	50	741
	Jan - Mar	637	66	42	745
2023/24	Apr - Jun	548	61	30	639
	Jul - Sep	615	54	26	695
	Oct - Dec	559	64	40	663
	Jan - Mar	646	62	25	733

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: January and February 2024
Table 2	Received: November 2023 and January and February 2024
Table 2	Closed: February 2024
Table 2	Open Cases: February 2024
Table 6	Hearings Valid to decision (Median weeks): September 2023
Table 6	Inquiries Valid to decision (Median weeks): May and August 2023
Table 6	Hearings Valid to decision (Mean weeks): September 2023
Table 6	Inquiries Valid to decision (Mean weeks): May and August 2023
Annex A Planning	Inquires Median weeks: August 2023
Annex A Enforcement	Median weeks: Hearings September 2023
Annex A Enforcement	Mean weeks: Hearings September 2023
Annex A Enforcement	Standard deviation: Hearings September 2023
Annex A Enforcement	Median weeks: Inquires February 2024
Annex A Enforcement	Mean weeks: Inquires February 2024
Annex A Enforcement	Standard deviation: Inquires February 2024

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. We have indicated in this publication any data where a number of cases has changed by more than five cases in a month; or where a measure (mean, median or standard deviation) has changed by more than 0.5 weeks.</p>
Measuring weeks	<p>Data are measured in days and then converted to weeks. Note that not all decimal values are possible where converting days to weeks. 1 day is 1/7 of a week, or 0.14 weeks (to two decimal places). 2 days = 0.29; 3 days = 0.43; 4 days = 0.57; 5 days = 0.71; 6 days = 0.86.</p> <p>When these are used to calculate averages, or displayed to one decimal place, the result will not equate to a full day which can be misleading: it may appear that we are measuring part days (e.g. 19.8 weeks) but we only measure in whole days.</p>

Glossary

Term	Explanation
Appeals	The right to appeal a planning decision made by a local authority is a key feature of the planning system, as is appealing when an authority is taking too long.
Appeals decided	Number of appeals by the date the appeal was decided by The Planning Inspectorate.
Appeals received	Number of appeals by the date the appeal was received by The Planning Inspectorate.
Applications	Planning Inspectorate manage the application process for proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within England and Wales in line with the 2008 Planning Act.
Closed	The total number of appeals decided, withdrawn, or turned away.
Decision	The outcome of the case e.g. appeal allowed or rejected. The date of the decision is taken as the date a decision letter is sent to the 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.

Term	Explanation
	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	<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>
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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