

# First Release

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**Next publication:**  
22nd Oct 2013  
(See Notes section)

## **Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Speed of Processing: January 2013 to March 2013**

*This Statistical First Release contains Official Statistics produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on Speed of Processing (SoP) of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims.*

*These show the average time taken to process new claims and changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) in calendar days for each local authority, rounded to the nearest day.*

These statistics were released on 23 July 2013 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority and contain new statistics relating to quarter 4 2012/13 (*January 2013 to March 2013*).

These statistics are Official Statistics. See:  
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/types-of-official-statistics>.

### **Key Findings**

- The average time taken to process new HB/CTB claims for quarter 4 2012/13 is 24 calendar days, compared with 24 calendar days in quarter 4 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process changes of circumstances for HB/CTB claims is 9 calendar days for quarter 4 2012/13, compared with 7 calendar days in quarter 4 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process new HB claims for quarter 4 2012/13 is 23 calendar days, compared with 24 calendar days in quarter 3 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process changes of circumstances for HB claims is 7 calendar days for quarter 4 2012/13, compared with 9 calendar days in quarter 4 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process new CTB claims for quarter 4 2012/13 is 24 calendar days, compared with 24 calendar days in quarter 4 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process changes of circumstances for CTB claims is 12 calendar days for quarter 4 2012/13, compared with 10 calendar days in quarter 4 of 2011/12.

**Further information and detailed tables, including a breakdown by local authority, can be viewed at:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing--2>

*If you have any comments or requests regarding this publication, please contact DWP via [stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).*

## HB/CTB Speed of Processing

HB and CTB are income related benefits. Speed of processing relates to the average time taken to process new claims and changes of circumstances for these benefits. The average time is measured in calendar days, rounded to the nearest day.

**Table 1 Average Speed of Processing for quarter 4, 2012/13:**

Average number of days to process (Great Britain)

	New Claims	Change of Circumstances
<b>Quarter 4</b>		
January	25	13
February	22	9
March	23	5

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

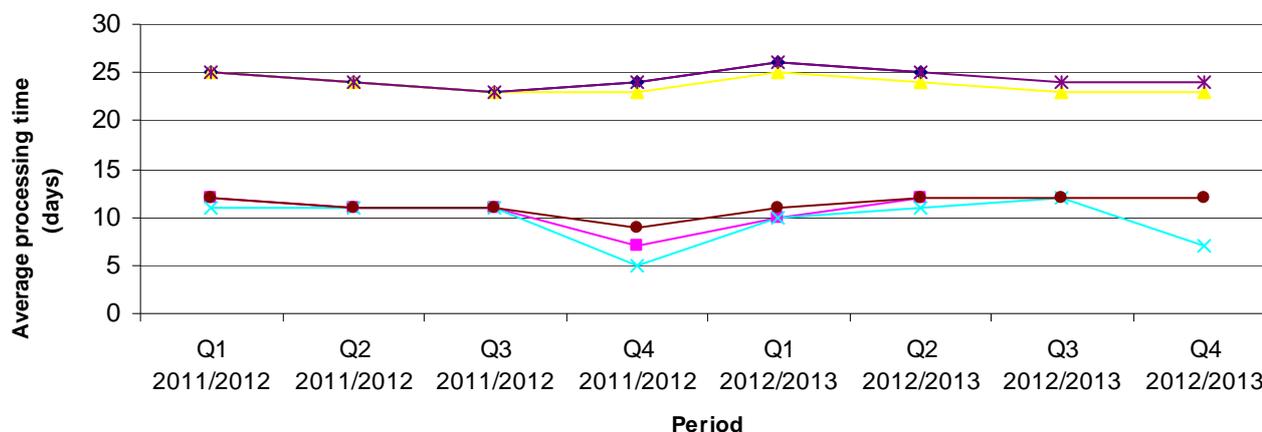
**Table 2: Average Speed of Processing for quarter 4, 2012/13 broken down by benefit (Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit):**

Average number of days to process (Great Britain)

	New Claims		Change of Circumstances	
	HB	CTB	HB	CTB
<b>Quarter 4</b>				
January	25	25	13	13
February	22	22	8	10
March	23	23	5	5

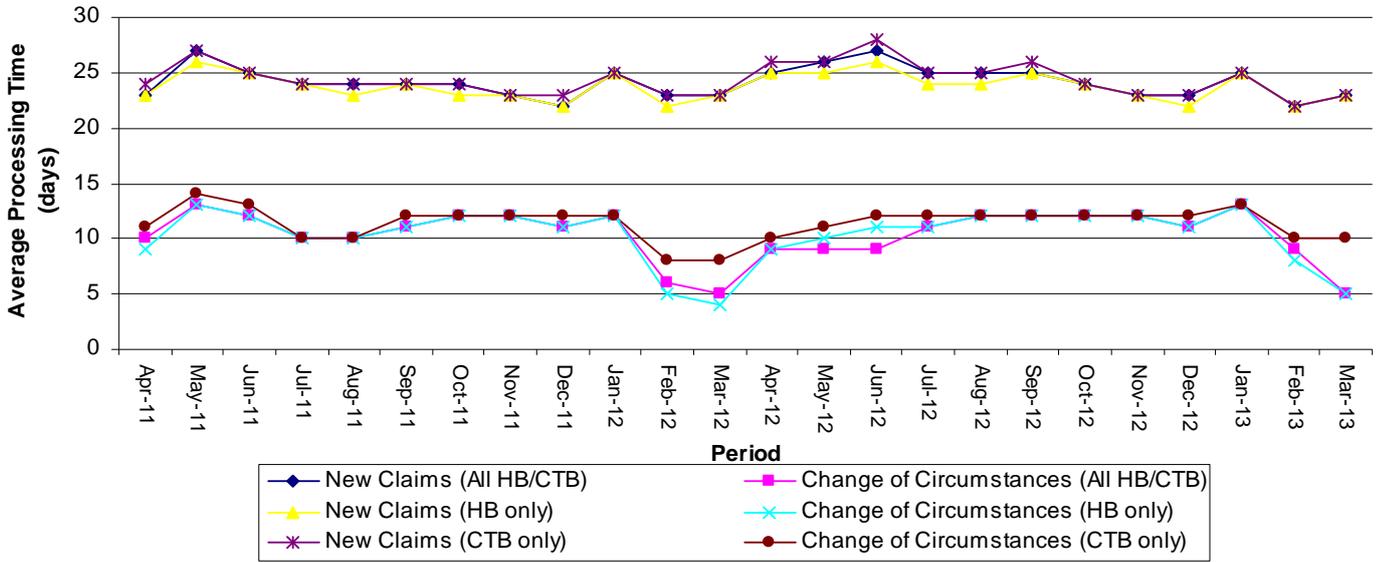
Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

**Average Processing Time per Quarter**



◆ New Claims (All HB/CTB)      ◆ Change of Circumstances (All HB/CTB)      ◆ New Claims (HB only)  
 ◆ Change of Circumstances (HB only)      ◆ New Claims (CTB only)      ◆ Change of Circumstances (CTB only)

Average Processing Time per Month



**Notes:**

Further information on Speed of Processing data sources and methodology is available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/209959/sop\\_rti\\_overview.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209959/sop_rti_overview.pdf)

Latest statistical breakdowns are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing--2>

## NOTES

### 1. Related Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit statistics

a) The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also publish Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit monthly caseload National Statistics – the statistics detail the number of people in receipt of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and the amount of benefit received. They also include breakdowns by local authority, tenancy type, passported benefits, family type and age group. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-caseload-statistics--2>

b) The historical Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit Claims Administration Quarterly Performance Data which is available to 2007/08 are based on clerical returns made by individual local authorities. Breakdowns of new claims and changes processing times are available historically, and the new claims processing times are broadly comparable over time. However, a change in definition for changes of circumstances between 2007/08 and 2009/10 means that direct comparison of this element with Speed of Processing statistics is not meaningful. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing-2012-13>

c) Access to previously reported Right Time Indicator statistics is available via the following page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-overview-of-speed-of-processing-right-time-indicator-statistics>

d) In addition, users can find links to DWP additional statistical analyses that have not been included in our standard publications at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/ad-hoc-statistical-publications-list>

### 2. National Statistics Code of Practice

DWP complies with the National Statistics Code of Practice and supporting Principles. Detailed policy statements and statement of compliance with the pre-release access to official statistics order 2008 are available via the link below:

[DWP policy statements](#)

DWP would like to hear your views on our statistical publications. If you use any of our statistics publications, we would be interested in hearing what you use them for and how well they meet your requirements. Please email DWP at [stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk). If you would like to receive occasional e-mails from DWP to directly inform you of documents seeking the views of users, join the “Welfare and Benefits” community at [www.statsusernet.org.uk](http://www.statsusernet.org.uk).

### 3. Known Issues, Changes and Revisions to SoP statistics

Quality assurance processes identified problems with quarter 4 data for 6 local authorities. In keeping with UKSA protocols we did not publish data for these local authorities for quarter 4 2012/13. Analysis indicates that these omissions should not significantly bias the headline Great Britain estimates for the average speed of processing for new claims and changes of circumstance.

As always with these statistics, genuine variations between months can occur at a Local Authority level. Some of these are caused by time limited issues or localised changes in operational policy. Hence, figures for individual authorities should be interpreted with care.

Also, the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in April 2013 may have caused some increased variation in the March 2013 numbers. Therefore, these should be used with caution.

### 4. Notification of future changes to SoP statistics

Council Tax Benefit was abolished in April 2013 and replaced by a system of localised support. In England, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) will be responsible for statistics. The Scottish and Welsh Governments have similar responsibility. Therefore the next release of this publication (for quarter 1 data of 2013/14), due to be released on 22nd October 2013, will not report Council Tax Benefit speed of processing statistics. The Housing Benefit series will continue.