

Housing Benefit Quarterly Performance Statistics

Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) publishes these statistics of quarterly performance for local authority (LA) administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (HB and CTB) to improve openness and accountability of HB and CTB performance. This is part of our strategy for Housing Benefit reform. It is right and proper that the public see how well or how badly their council is doing.

Housing Benefit is a vital weapon in our attack on poverty and is an important part of our Welfare to Work programme. Good Housing Benefit performance can have a significant impact in tackling poverty and providing opportunity, whereas poor performance restricts opportunity and leaves people facing financial problems. We are using the statistics to challenge poor performance.

Performance Measures

The statistics currently relate to Performance Measures for the first quarter of 2007/08 and will be updated. The statistics cover the following areas of performance:

PM1: Average time for processing new claims

This measures the average processing time in calendar days across all new claims for which the date of decision is within the quarter. The time for each claim is measured from the day the claim is received by the LA to the day a full decision on the claim is made.

PM2: Percentage of new claims outstanding over 50 days

This measures the number of new claims not decided more than 50 days after the day of receipt by the LA on the last day of each quarter as a percentage of the total number of new claims outstanding on the last day of the quarter.

PM3: Percentage of new claims decided within 14 days of receipt of the local authority receiving all necessary information.

This measures the number of new claims decided within 14 days of the local authority receiving all necessary information as a percentage across all new claims for which the date of decision is within the quarter.

PM4: Percentage of new Rent Allowance claims paid where the first payment is made on time

This measures the number of new rent allowance claims where the first payment is made on time, either (a) within 7 days of the full decision or (b) by the first date that payment is due to be made, across all new claims for which the first payment is made in the quarter.

PM5: Average time for processing changes of circumstances

This measures the average processing time in calendar days across all written notifications of changes for which the date of the revised decision is within the quarter. The time for each change of circumstance is generally measured from the day of receipt by the LA to the day on which the full revised decision is given.

PM6: Percentage of cases calculated correctly

This measures the percentage of cases within a random sample for which the calculation of benefit is found to be correct on the basis of the information available.

Changes to the way Performance Data is presented

From 1 April 2006 changes were made to the way performance data is presented to bring the data into line with the way performance is assessed under the HB/CTB Performance Standards. The quartiles for each performance measure have been superseded by the grade ranges which determine the Performance Standards' 1–4 scores that indicate relative performance. These are:

- 4 Excellent
- 3 Good
- 2 Meeting minimum requirements
- 1 Not meeting minimum requirements

These scores are now shown on the quarterly performance report the DWP sends to all LAs; and will accompany the data published on this site.

Changes to deadlines

Please note that from now on local authorities will be expected to adhere to the 4-week deadline for HB and CTB data returns, as set out in the Stats 124. This will apply to all quarterly returns.

Authorities should ensure that data returns are sent to the DWP Information Directorate in good time for receipt **before** the deadline expires. Data received after the deadline will not be published on the DWP website or included in the quarterly management reports issued to Chief Executives by the Local Authority Performance Division.

CPA Scoring (English LAs only)

CPA self assessments for 2005/06 (due to have been completed by 31 July 2006) should have been calculated using the pre-April 2006 Performance Standards 1-4 score grade ranges for the *Claims administration* theme.

From 1 April 2006 CPA scoring for this theme is based on the new grade ranges.

Further information

For further information on the scoring methodology and grade ranges see HB/CTB Circulars **A3/2006**, **A7/2006**, **A12/2006** and **A3/2007**.