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Performance Information, Definitions and Interpretation

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“Audit Scotland asks each Chief Executive to ensure that all officers involved in the collection and reporting of performance data are fully aware of the contents of this Guide and of their responsibilities.”

“The Commission’s decision to incorporate PPRing for a range of functions and service areas within its 2008 Direction ... reflects a desire to see councils report more effectively and to demonstrate to their communities and citizens that they are securing BV.”

Introduction

1.1 Audit Scotland is a statutory, independent body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland. In this Guide, any reference to action by Audit Scotland implies action taken on behalf of the Accounts Commission.

1.2 The Local Government Act 1992 (the Act) requires the Accounts Commission to give directions that require councils, fire & rescue and police authorities to publish information relating to the performance of their activities. This is intended to:

a) facilitate the making of appropriate comparisons (by reference to the criteria of cost, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and of securing best value in accordance with section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003) between –

i. the standards of performance achieved by different relevant bodies in that financial year or other period; and

ii. the standards of performance achieved by such bodies in different financial years or, as the case may be, other periods.

b) facilitate the drawing of conclusions about the discharge of those bodies' functions under Part 2 (community planning) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

1.3 In December 2008 the Accounts Commission issued its Direction for the financial year 2009/10. The Direction covers Section 1 (1) (a) of the legislation and does not specifically include community planning functions. A copy of the Direction is given in **Appendix A**.

1.4 The Commission's 2008 Direction represents a significant change in approach. It is designed to:

- place increased emphasis on self determination by councils of the performance material, both qualitative and quantitative, that they choose to report to the public, in accordance with the principles and guidance underlying Best Value
- recognise that change is taking place in the local government environment, but that it is too early to see where this will lead and council performance reporting is not sufficiently developed to allow a complete shift from the current arrangements.

1.5 In its 2008 Direction the Commission has exercised its powers under Section 1 of the Local Government Act 1992 to place responsibility for meeting their BV responsibilities more directly with councils while retaining a small number of specified indicators emphasising the Commission's commitment to ensuring that councils publish performance information on:

- a range of corporate issues covering key BV concerns such as equalities, resource and asset management affecting overall service delivery
- revenue and service cost management
- front line services and issues directly relating to service user experience.

1.6 In order to develop the 2008 Direction, Audit Scotland undertook discussions with representatives of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), various Divisions of the Scottish Government (SG), and other stakeholders. A consultation paper was issued in September to CoSLA, the professional associations, the SG, councils and a range of other stakeholders. Responses from consultees were then reflected in a report considered by the Accounts Commission prior to it approving the Direction in December 2008.

1.7 The Commission and Audit Scotland would like to express their thanks to all those who assisted with the development of the Direction.

1.8 This Guide provides further information to assist authorities in fulfilling their obligations in relation to the 2008 Direction. For simplicity, throughout the Guide, authorities (including relevant joint boards) are generally referred to as 'councils'. Similarly, references to chief executives should be taken to include clerks to joint boards as appropriate.

Context

Best Value

2.1 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a statutory duty of Best Value (BV) on councils and it is important that the performance management and reporting requirements stemming from the 2008 Direction are seen in the broader context of the 2003 legislation.

2.2 The Commission takes the view that performance comparison, whether over time or between authorities, requires a wide range of performance information and more than could be specified in its annual Direction under the 1992 Act.

2.3 Statutory guidance prepared by the Best Value Task Force sets out the arrangements councils should make for securing Best Value. These include:

"Effective performance management systems, which include the use of external comparison, through which performance issues can be identified, monitored and addressed"

"The use of public performance reporting so that stakeholders are told what quality of service is being delivered and what they can expect in future."

2.4 The statutory guidance defines the duties required to provide BV and identifies a range of characteristics which an authority that secures BV will be able to demonstrate. It makes links between a wide range of issues including leadership, structure, partnership working, and service provision. The guidance is available at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/04/19166/35250

2.5 The BV audit undertaken by Audit Scotland uses information from a range of sources, including the Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs), the SPIs, reports from other regulatory bodies and evidence from the authorities themselves to assess performance and improvement. This evidence is used to report on councils' performance management and public performance reporting as well as their detailed performance in relation to specific functions where this is possible.

The Concordat

2.6 The concordat agreed between the Scottish Government (the Government) and CoSLA in November 2007 and subsequent guidance on developing SOAs recognise the need for councils to continue to report in accordance with statutory requirements (which include public performance reporting under the Best Value legislation). The guidance (Feb 2008) states:

"The Single Outcome Agreement is already a complex document, and there is no intention that they are made more complex by the inclusion of significant amounts of performance management information. ...Councils and their partners will have to demonstrate that this information is available in order to fulfil their responsibilities for Best Value.

The move to SOAs does not remove the need for Councils to report on the quality, accessibility and value for money of their services as part of their general public performance reporting."

Additional SOA guidance issued in November 2009 makes clear that:

Councils should produce (SOA) reports on behalf of CPPs in September of each year. ...these reports will form an integral part of the reports which Councils already prepare under their statutory duty of Public Performance Reporting.

Duties

Councils

3.1 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a statutory duty on local authorities to make arrangements:

"to secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost); and in making these arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"

“for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of functions”

Within the context of the duty of public performance reporting, the 2003 legislation amended the 1992 Act to that set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

3.2 It is emphasised that the 1992 Act lays a duty upon each council to ensure that it has in place such arrangements for collecting, recording, and publishing performance information that will allow it to comply with a Direction from the Commission.

3.3 The council must also ensure that, so far as is practicable, the information published is accurate and complete. **Audit Scotland asks each Chief Executive to ensure that this is the case, and that all officers involved in the collection and reporting of performance information are fully aware of the contents of this Guide and of their responsibilities.**

3.4 The arrangements a council puts in place should mean that it:

- establishes systems and procedures to ensure that the information is gathered
- undertakes checks to ensure that, as far as is practicable, the information gathered for publication is accurate and complete
- arranges to keep all working papers and any other sources which may be examined by appointed auditors, and is able to make these available on request
- informs all officers involved in the collection and reporting of information of the duties of BV, PPRing and the SPIs, and the guidance supporting each
- places the performance information required by the Direction in the public domain by the prescribed date
- maintains a publicly available record of the reported information.

3.5 Whether a council provides services directly or arranges their provision through contractual arrangements with third parties, it remains responsible for ensuring that information demonstrating Best Value (BV) in the provision of services for which it has a responsibility is collected and publicly reported.

3.6 Audit Scotland is aware that, in many councils, contractors in either the private or voluntary sectors now undertake work previously undertaken in-house. In each case, where the council has ‘client’ responsibility for out-sourced work which would otherwise be undertaken by directly employed staff, it must ensure that information needed for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the Direction is available to it and published in accordance with the Direction.

3.7 Councils should take care not to underestimate the attention to detail involved in ensuring that information can be provided to an appropriate level of accuracy and completeness. Therefore, councils are urged to:

- ensure that suitable systems have been established and tested to enable them to comply with their statutory duty
- contact their external auditor for advice as soon as possible if difficulties are anticipated or they wish to discuss any aspect of proposed arrangements.

Auditors

3.8 The appointed auditor’s statutory duty in relation to the performance information is set out in section 99 (d) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (as inserted by section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 1992).

3.9 That duty is to be satisfied that the council has made such arrangements for collecting, recording and publishing performance data as are required to ensure that, so far as practicable, everything published is accurate and complete.

3.10 The detailed work required will depend on the source and range of the information and the extent to which the basis on which it has been prepared has already been subject to scrutiny and risk assessment. That judgement lies with individual auditors

3.11 It should be noted that this duty is not to ensure that the published data is accurate; that is the responsibility of each council. Rather, auditors are required to assess whether councils are fulfilling their obligations as set out in paragraph 3.2 above.

Publication

Councils

4.1 In accordance with the objectives of the 1992 Act, the 2008 Direction requires councils to publish information making direct comparison between performance in 2009/10 and in 2008/09 where appropriate (see **Appendix B**). It is expected that councils will show the information for each year so that citizens can identify the performance changes that have occurred.

4.2 The Act requires each council to report the information publicly within six months of the close of the year for which the Direction was set (ie by 30 September). The Commission's objective in its new Direction is to encourage councils to integrate reporting on SPIs with broader PPRing. Councils are, therefore, advised to consider their options carefully before deciding what reporting methods to utilise. Whatever arrangements are put in place, they may be subject to audit in order to ensure that the BV duty of public performance reporting (PPRing) in accordance with the 2003 Act and its statutory guidance is met.

4.3 It is recognised that PPRing in accordance with the BV requirements is likely to take place over the year. The statutory guidance points out that:

"Plans for publication should be determined by factors other than the availability of information. There is considerable scope to time information around the needs of different audiences and the requirements of different planning cycles. Reporting times should allow sufficient time for stakeholders to provide feedback that can inform key policy decisions and target setting and be fed into the next planning cycle.

Authorities should also consider when stakeholders are likely to be most interested in performance information or when they will find it most relevant...."

4.4 **The Commission's decision to incorporate PPRing for a range of functions and service areas within its 2008 Direction** is not intended to limit councils in their choice of performance information or publication timing. Rather, it **reflects a desire to see councils report more effectively and to demonstrate to their communities and citizens that they are securing BV**. Nevertheless, councils are required to put the information for the Commission's specified indicators into the public domain within six months of the financial year end.

Audit Scotland

4.5 The 1992 Act requires that the published information facilitates appropriate comparison between councils and over time. The Accounts Commission recognises that in accordance with the principles of BV, comparison between councils is better done using as wide a range of information as is practical and that information reported in accordance with its annual Direction forms only a part of that picture. Audit Scotland will continue to use the information in the national studies, audits of Best Value and local government overview reporting.

4.6 Audit Scotland currently publishes the full range of SPI data on its website at: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance

The selection of information for reporting

5.1 Public Performance Reporting (PPRing) should be based on the BV criteria and on individual council policy objectives and performance management regimes. Reporting in this way rather than on a limited range of SPIs will help to provide a much clearer and rounded picture of performance by a council as well as facilitating improved comparison between them and over time.

5.2 The reporting requirements specified in the 2008 Direction represent a major departure from the previously tightly specified list of SPIs. The Direction requires councils to publish a range of information that will:

- demonstrate that they are securing Best Value
- assist stakeholders and other interested parties to compare their performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

5.3 Best Value is structured around a number of key principles and in determining what performance information to report councils should take account of the statutory guidance and advisory notes issued to accompany the 2003 Act.

5.4 In addition the Commission anticipates that in reaching decisions about what to report, councils will take account of a range of factors including, but not limited to:

- the priorities and objectives established in their single outcome agreement with the Scottish Government
- the performance reporting requirements or obligations arising from other legislation
- relevant voluntary suites or frameworks of performance information determined by government, regulatory agencies, professional associations or others
- national standards and targets for service delivery determined by the Scottish Government, professional associations, regulatory bodies or others
- local service priorities and objectives
- service user views.

5.5 The Commission emphasises the requirement for councils to take a more rounded approach to PPRing in accordance with all the BV criteria and to demonstrate economy and efficiency in the delivery of services. It recognises that councils have primary responsibility for selecting the information they choose to present in their reporting framework. The 2008 Direction requires councils to take greater responsibility for that choice and seeks to facilitate:

- more broad based self assessment of performance
- improved performance management and reporting
- a balance in the reported information between cost and quality of service.

5.6 Nevertheless, the Commission is committed to ensuring that some information is published to facilitate direct comparison between councils and over time across Scotland, notably information on:

- a range of corporate issues covering key BV concerns such as equalities, resource and asset management affecting overall service delivery
- revenue and service cost management
- front line services and issues directly relating to service user experience

5.7 Additionally, the Commission is concerned that councils make greater use of cost information to demonstrate that they are achieving a balance between cost and quality in service delivery as part of their Best Value performance management and public performance reporting obligations. The Commission is firmly of the view that service cost information is important to stakeholders and citizens, providing additional context for the assessment of performance.

5.8 As a consequence of these concerns the Commission's 2008 Direction presents a balanced package of both permissive and specified requirements.

5.9 Although the choice of material published to demonstrate the securing of BV is a matter for individual councils, a number of performance information frameworks available for a range of services provide guidance which might be of assistance to councils in their selection of material for reporting at a local level. These include, but are not limited to the examples shown in *Exhibit 1* below.

5.10 The Commission anticipates that these and similar frameworks will be widely used and reported on by councils and notes that some, such as those developed by the joint audit agencies for the whole public sector, are particularly helpful in providing indicators which demonstrate aspects of service cost within the context of common standards of service provision.

5.11 Additionally, information based on qualitative assessment is also helpful. This may include:

- the results of local and national surveys of service users and citizens
- service quality and adequacy assessments by various scrutiny bodies

- comparative reviews undertaken for the council by independent external bodies and agencies such as Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Exhibit 1: Examples of available information for use by councils to assist with performance management and demonstrating BV.

<p>The indicators on human resources, finance, ICT, procurement and estates management published jointly by the five UK public sector audit agencies in May 2007, available at: www.public-audit-forum.gov.uk/performanceindicators.pdf</p> <p>The asset management indicators developed by the Federation of Property Societies</p> <p>The indicators developed by CIPFA Heads of Service to reflect the performance of finance services in councils</p> <p>The Community Care Outcomes Framework developed by a range of stakeholders to demonstrate performance against the national outcomes for community care services, available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/care/JointFuture/CommunityCareOutcomesF</p> <p>The 'Improving Outcomes' material available from the Improvement Service at: http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/core-programmes/improving-outcomes/</p> <p>The public libraries quality improvement matrix developed by the Scottish Library & Information Council, available at: www.slainte.org.uk/Slic/plqim/plqimindex.htm</p> <p>The roads and lighting benchmarking indicators developed by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation (Scotland)</p>
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Conventions

6.1 For many years Audit Scotland has used a set of conventions to assist councils to monitor and report on their performance on a consistent basis. These conventions are shown in *Exhibit 2*.

Exhibit 2: Measurement and reporting conventions used for the specified PIs.

The following general conventions should be applied when gathering the information unless otherwise stated:

- | |
|--|
| <p>a) Where an indicator requires cost information, councils should follow the CIPFA guidance, as endorsed and interpreted by LASAAC and allocate overhead costs when determining the cost of an activity.</p> <p>b) Where relevant, indicators should be calculated using capital charges in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Best Value Accounting Code of Practice and underlying guidance. If difficulty is experienced in allocating capital charges to the divisions of service specified in an indicator, a reasonable basis of apportionment should be agreed with the auditor.</p> <p>c) 'Reporting year' refers to the 12 months to 31 March.</p> <p>d) Information should be based on the relevant total or 'population' (eg number of users; crimes; collections; pupils; etc.) and not on a sample of these.</p> <p>e) Where an action or process does not wholly fall within a single reporting year, then, except where a definition directs otherwise, the information relating to it should be included for the reporting year in which the action or process was completed.</p> <p>f) Where an application is received and dealt with to completion on the same day it should be recorded as one day. Where an application is received on the 1st day of a month and dealt with on the 14th day, the time taken to process the application should include both the day it was received and the date it was completed i.e. in this example the time to process the application would be recorded as 14 days.</p> <p>g) Councils may calculate weeks as either (a) total working days elapsed divided by five, or (b) total calendar days elapsed divided by seven. Councils should make clear to the external auditor which basis has been used for each indicator where this is relevant.</p> <p>h) In some instances, a council may need to make an apportionment of costs across different activities where a common service may be shared. In such a case, a suitable basis for apportionment should be agreed with the external auditor.</p> |
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Guidance on the specified Performance Indicators

Councils

The two Statutory Performance Indicators for councils are set out in the 2008 Direction.

The Accounts Commission requires that within the context of the two SPIs and as part of their obligations under the 1992 Act, councils publish performance information on:

- a range of corporate issues covering key BV concerns such as equalities, resource and asset management affecting overall service delivery
- revenue and service cost management
- front line services and issues directly relating to service user experience

To facilitate this requirement, and to ensure a degree of commonality of reporting among councils, the Commission's 2008 Direction retains a range of specified indicators from previous Directions.

These indicators do not cover all the services and functions against which councils are required to report. Neither, are they considered sufficient to demonstrate BV for those services they do cover. Rather, they provide some continuity from the approach taken in previous Directions for certain service areas.

The requirement to demonstrate BV in PPRing has been in place since 2003 and is likely to continue.

The Commission will review both the extent to which it wishes to specify indicators and the content of those indicators regularly.

Those specified in the 2008 Direction, as set out below, must be seen as a starting point for future development and change.

Specified Performance Indicators

- 1 *The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for:*
- a) teachers*
 - b) all other local government employees*

Definitions

This indicator is defined in accordance with 'Value for Money in public sector corporate services' (May 2007) and amended guidance issued in October 2008, published on behalf of the joint UK audit bodies and available at: www.public-audit-forum.gov.uk

It has been adopted across much of the public and private sectors as the standard way of reporting sickness absence, and, therefore, facilitates comparison across a wider range of organisations.

This indicator should be based on figures for the latest financial year. It includes all permanent staff and those temporary or fixed term staff who have been employed for over a year. Agency staff are excluded.

The numerator is the total number of working days lost due to sickness absence, which includes, absence which is self-certified, certified by a GP, long-term (even if staff are unpaid), industrial injury or disability. Where an employee reports sick part way through a working day/shift, authorities should record the information to the nearest half-day/shift (if possible).

Authorised leave which is not sickness absence, eg maternity, paternity, adoption, maternity support, parental leave or other similar authorised absence which is not sickness absence should not be included.

The denominator is the average number of all FTE staff employed during the financial year. (Working days/shifts, means days/shifts scheduled for work after holidays/leave days have been excluded).

For part-time staff, councils should calculate the FTE for both the numerator and denominator on a consistent basis. For example, where the standard working week for full time employees is 36.25 hours, someone working a 15 hr week counts as 41% FTE, therefore, such an employee with 9 shifts lost due to sickness absence would have $9 \times .41 = 3.7$ days sickness absence.

Example
Total number of days lost per year through sickness absence = 700
Total number of FTE staff = 500
Days lost per employee is $700 / 500 = 1.4$

The following staff should be included within each category:

Teachers

- All posts involved in direct teaching ie those on teachers terms and conditions and required to be GTC registered plus working in a school (of any description) providing teaching services directly to pupils/students. This includes peripatetic teachers, support for learning teachers, visiting specialists, home tutors, guidance teachers, assistant head teachers, depute head teachers and head teachers.

Local government employees

- All posts on JNC conditions/scales (Chief Officers) plus those on SNJC conditions which will include posts employed on management, administrative, technical, clerical and manual activities. Also those GTC registered teachers not involved in direct teaching service delivery to pupils and working on initiatives of an authority-wide scale.
- Posts on SJNC conditions which cover Craft workers.

Source

The aggregate records will be available centrally within a council, normally within the Human Resources or Finance Departments. The detailed records are likely to be held within services.

Interpretation

The indicator looks at the effectiveness of the HR function in terms of impact on the overall levels of sickness absence in the council through development of processes and procedures, and training for managers. Councils should aim to reduce the number of days lost through sickness absence over time.

2 *The number and percentage of the highest paid 2% and 5% of earners among council employees, that are women.*

	<i>Number of women</i>	<i>% of posts</i>
<i>In top 2% of all employees</i>		
<i>In top 5% of all employees</i>		

Definitions

The calculation of 'highest paid' should be based on gross pay including Islands weighting, performance related pay, bonus etc. However, it should exclude overtime, and fringe benefits (such as leases of free cars, health insurance, and a range of non-cash benefits). For part-time staff, salaries should be calculated on a pro-rata basis (fte salary). Apply to permanent staff and temporary staff employed for over one year only. Staff on fixed terms contracts who have been employed by the authority for over a year should be considered permanent. Staff on job share should count as one post.

The indicator excludes teachers (including peripatetic teachers, support for learning teachers, visiting specialists, home tutors, guidance teachers, assistant head teachers, depute head teachers and head teachers) ie those on teachers terms and conditions and required to be GTC registered.

All other council employees on SJNC (Chief Officers) plus those traditionally on APT&C conditions, and posts on SJC conditions/scales which traditionally have been employed on craft and manual worker conditions/grades should be included in the indicator.

Where there are a number of employees on the same salary, straddling the 2% and 5% point, all should be included. NB: members of staff in the top 2% of employees are a sub-set of those in the top 5%. That is, the indicator does not cover the top 7% of employees.

The figures reported should be the number of staff employed by the council at 31 March.


Source

Council's personnel and pay records

Interpretation

The delivery of quality services is dependent on a trained and motivated workforce and it is, therefore essential that councils' employment policy reflects their commitment to equal opportunities. The indicator provides a picture of the current gender balance in more senior posts. This will help councils to identify areas of potentially unfair or discriminatory practices as well as providing a baseline for measuring improvement over time.

The indicator does not deal with equalities relating to ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

 *The number of council buildings from which the council delivers services to the public and percentage of these in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people.*

NB: The Federation of Property Societies (FPS) has developed a building assessment framework to assist the comparability of assessment processes and this has been circulated to FPS representatives in each council. Nevertheless, each council must determine what assessment is required since it is the council that is subject to potential challenge for failure to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the Act).

Definitions

'Council buildings' mean those from which the council provides a service and for which it is responsible for meeting the required standards for access. It includes buildings at least a part of which are usually open to the public but excludes:

- public conveniences that are not integral to such buildings
- schools and educational establishments
- residential homes
- offices that do not contain any public service areas.

On a campus/complex which contains more than one building, each building should be assessed separately.

Where the council operates services through the medium of a trust or company (eg leisure services) the buildings through which these services are delivered should be included for the purposes of this indicator.

Buildings rented or leased by the council should be included in cases where it carries responsibility and is subject to potential legal challenge for failure to comply under the Act.

'All public areas': The indicator covers a wide range of buildings and is not designed simply to cover offices. Therefore, it was considered appropriate in developing the indicator to set this standard (ie all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people). If, for example, a disabled person can access the reference section but not the lending section of a library, it would be inappropriate to argue that the building fully meets the requirements.

Similarly, within a leisure centre, if only some of the facilities are available to the disabled because of access issues that building would not be seen as meeting the standard.

The Act defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

'Suitable for and accessible to' means that:

- practices, policies or procedures make it possible and reasonably practical for disabled people to use a service
- auxiliary aids or services are provided which would enable or make it easier for disabled people to use a service.

Buildings considered suitable for and accessible to disabled people are those that have been subjected to an accessibility audit or an equivalent assessment covering all aspects of the needs of the disabled person. Unless specifically exempted under the Building Standards Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (the Regulations) the term 'disabled person' always includes a provision for wheelchair users.

In accordance with the Regulations standards of building access (ie to the entrance from the public road or car parking area) and egress must also be sufficient for the needs of disabled people.

Where toilet facilities are provided, facilities for disabled people will normally be required.

The key concern is that the requirements of the DDA are met. The primary question – particularly within office buildings - is whether or not a disabled person can properly gain access to the services within that building. It may be that a service normally provided on an upper floor (eg development services) can be made available in certain circumstances as a reasonable adjustment on a lower floor (eg for a disabled person wishing to see a planning application). It is not intended that a building should be seen to fail the SPI standard because of the need for this sort of practice. However, if a council chamber or committee suite is not accessible to the disabled the building would be seen as failing.

The primary challenge is to measure against the need to comply with the DDA. The guidance concerning building regulations is there to ensure some commonality of approach and to ensure that minimum standards are applied.

The indicator excludes schools and educational establishments because these are subject to measurement under separate Scottish legislation. Nevertheless, councils will be aware that any such building (or parts thereof) used for normal public services (eg as a dual use leisure centre or library) is required to meet the standards of any other building from which such services might be offered even if it is only open to the public on a part time basis. Such buildings or parts of buildings should, therefore, be contained within the count made for the indicator.

Source

Council's property and access audit records.

Interpretation

The indicator reflects the extent to which councils have been successful in meeting the requirement of Part 3 of the Act to facilitate access to their buildings for disabled people for the purpose of service delivery. It does not cover access to buildings for disabled staff.

Under the Act, the council is responsible for identifying any physical feature of its buildings, which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of a service. If any such feature is identified, the council is responsible for taking reasonable action to:

- remove the feature
- alter it so that it no longer has that effect
- provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature
- provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available to disabled people

Councils will be assessing accessibility to services in their buildings and making appropriate adaptations or alternative service delivery arrangements. The indicator is expected to show an improving trend over time as a higher proportion of the councils buildings are assessed and relevant adaptations are made. Nevertheless, it is recognised that not all buildings are capable of being modified or adapted to meet the accessibility standards and that, therefore, councils are unlikely to be able to report that 100% of buildings are accessible.

Some councils may have a higher proportion of buildings that are subject to planning or physical restrictions as to what adaptations are possible. Councils will, therefore, also have in place other strategies, including the use of electronic service delivery (e-services), to provide access to services for those who require them in their home or at other locations. For example, most councils offer home library services for those unable to get to the libraries. However, this does not preclude the responsibility of the council to seek to ensure that the libraries meet accessibility standards for the disabled.

4 *The gross administration cost per benefits case.*

Definitions

The numerator for this indicator is all costs associated with housing benefit and council tax benefit administration (including counter-fraud work). In order to make costs more directly comparable they will be weighted by caseload mix using the same weights as those used in the HB/CTB administration subsidy distribution formula.

The administration cost should be calculated in accordance with the agreed CIPFA Scottish Directors of Finance Section arrangement and the pro forma used by them for benchmarking.

No adjustments should be made to reported gross costs in respect of any of the following funding streams:

- DWP HB/CTB administration subsidy
- DWP set-up funding for the Verification Framework
- DWP on-going costs funding for the Verification Funding
- Value of benefit overpayments recovered by the LA.

The denominator for the calculation per case is the 'live' caseload. The denominator should be calculated as follows:

- Take each caseload (RR, PRS, RSL and CTB) for the quarters, May, August, November and February, as reported on DWP stats 121 and 122.
- Calculate the average of the 4 results and apply to the caseload weights below.

(Refer to HB/CTB S1/2000 for further details of the calculation).

Gross Cost

[(1.51 x RR caseload) + (2.13 x PRS caseload) + (2 x RSL caseload) + 1.52 x CTB caseload]

(RR – rent rebate, PRS – private rented sector, RSL – Registered social landlord, CTB – council tax benefit).

Councils should follow the CIPFA guidance, as endorsed by LASAAC and apportion overhead costs when determining the cost. The indicator should be calculated using capital charges in accordance with the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice. If difficulty is experienced apportioning capital charges for the indicator, a reasonable basis of apportionment should be agreed with the auditor.

Each of the following benefits applications should be counted as a single claim for the purposes of calculating the weighted caseload.

- a public sector tenant for HB
- a public sector tenant for CTB

- an owner occupier for CTB
- the private rented sector for rent allowance
- the private rented sector for council tax benefit
- registered social landlords for rent allowance
- registered social landlords for council tax benefit.

Source

Housing Benefit and Council Tax records for public and private sectors as reported through DWP Management Information System and related stats forms 121 and 122.

CIPFA Directors of Finance calculation pro forma.

Interpretation

The policy adopted by a council on the level of advice and counselling available to claimants and the efficiency of the administrative process will impact upon this indicator.

A council may choose to provide a high level of advice and counselling to claimants. The costs of such services will have an impact upon this indicator.

Benefit claims may be more complicated in areas where:

- more people reside at different addresses for short periods of time
- there are more private lets
- there are more people in shared accommodation.

Consequently, the time taken to collect all the information needed to process a claim may be longer. This will be reflected in the costs of providing the service.

5 *The cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling.*

Definitions

The calculation of the cost per dwelling should be recorded utilising the pro-forma issued by the CIPFA Scottish Directors of Finance Section for benchmarking. The Directors of Finance Section anticipate the pro forma being distributed to Councils early in the new financial year.

The cost includes billing, collection and debt recovery administration for both council tax and water charges less intervention income and recoveries received from the public water authorities. Intervention income is the warrant surcharge element of debt that has been collected by the Council without having been passed to the Sheriff Officer and is credited to the Council's Revenue Account.

Exclude costs associated with (and income from) non-domestic rates and residual Community Charge collection and from the administration of Council Tax benefits.

The Best Value Accounting Code of Practice (BVACOP) defines the total cost of an activity as all the costs which are attributable to undertaking that activity. Any discount for prompt/lump sum payment, is a direct cost of collecting council tax and is to be included in the cost for the purposes of the PI.

The cost of collecting council tax should be reduced by any intervention income received by the Council. Intervention income is the warrant surcharge element of debt that has been collected by the Council without having been passed to the Sheriff Officer. The income is credited to the Finance service within the Consolidated Revenue Account.

Councils should follow the CIPFA guidance, as endorsed by LASAAC and apportion overhead costs when determining the cost. The indicator should be calculated using capital charges in accordance with the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice. If difficulty is experienced apportioning capital charges for the indicator, a reasonable basis of apportionment should be agreed with the auditor.

'Dwellings' are those on the council's valuation list at 31 March at the end of the reporting year excluding those annotated as separate garages, car ports, car parking spaces and domestic storage premises.

Source

Council's accounting records and Council Tax system. CIPFA Directors of Finance calculation pro forma.

Interpretation

This indicator looks at how efficient councils are at collecting council tax due to them.

The ability of each council to negotiate a fee or income to recover the cost of collection for water and sewerage charges will have some impact on the council tax collection costs.

The efficiency of the council's collection systems may be affected by the ability and willingness of taxpayers to pay, and the extent of enforcement action taken by the council to recover tax due to it.

6 *Current year income from Council Tax:*

- a) *The income due from Council Tax for the year, net of reliefs and rebates*
- b) *The percentage of a) that was received during the year.*

Definitions

'Income due' means the amount of Council Tax payable for the year and, excludes all water charges, and any outstanding Council Tax (or Community Charge) from previous years.

'Reliefs and rebates' means Council Tax Benefit, single person discount, and any other permitted reductions to individual bills.

Tax recovered from previous years debt should not be used to offset outstanding debt for the purpose of this indicator. The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2000 allow councils to bill and receive lump sum payments for council tax in the year prior to the council tax falling due. These amounts should be offset against the appropriate year for which the payments relate.

Source

Council tax system.

Interpretation

This indicator may be seen as a measure of the effectiveness of the council in collecting current council tax due to it.

The effectiveness of the council's collection processes should be considered in association with indicator 1 above.

7 *The number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid.*

Definitions

The Late Payments of Commercial Debts (Interests) Act 1998 recognises a general payment period of 30 days unless other terms are mutually agreed. The indicator excludes any standard period for payment of greater than 30 days imposed by the council.

'Receipt' means date of receipt of the invoice by the council (not the payment section) at any location (including schools). If systems cannot record this date, two days should be added to the invoice date to allow postage time. Where the supplier has either wrongly dated or not dated the invoice, councils should use the date of receipt of the invoice at the council. If the invoice is sent in advance, the date of receipt of the goods or service should be used.

'Date of payment' means the date:

- of dispatch of a cheque or other payment instrument
- of notification of bank for BACS payment
- of bank processing if the council specifies a period after which the bank is to make payment following its receipt of the BACS tape.

Internal payments between departments of the council (including DSOs) should be excluded but invoices paid by DSOs to other bodies should be included.

Invoices to be counted are those which fall within the scope of VAT (including zero rated and exempt items). Therefore, payments to small businesses not large enough to fall within the scope of VAT will not be reflected in this indicator.

Invoices sent to schools for payment from delegated school budgets may be excluded.

Where councils' systems cannot produce the data as defined above, a performance figure based on a sample of at least 500 invoices will be acceptable. Councils should ensure that the sampling includes:

- all departments of the council
- invoices from the council's various payment groups, for example, 14 day payments, next day payments.

Councils making payment through credit card companies should ensure that they arrange for the company to pay invoices to creditors within 30 days. Where this condition is met within the 30 days then all individual payments within the credit card statement should count as being paid within 30 days.

Direct debit arrangements, where it is the responsibility of the creditor to arrange for payment to be made, should not be included in this indicator.

Source

Creditors system.

Interpretation

This indicator shows the percentage of invoices paid by councils within 30 calendar days. Thirty calendar days reflects the normal credit term period in accordance with the Late Payments of Commercial Debts (Interests) Act 1998 .

Councils' policies or approaches towards the payment of invoices, which include immediate payment to local suppliers or payment in accordance with agreed credit terms, will affect this indicator.

Some invoices will not be paid within the 30 days because they are disputed.

Condition and suitability of operational accommodation

- a) The proportion of operational accommodation that is in a satisfactory condition.*
- b) The proportion of operational accommodation that is suitable for its current use.*

Definitions

Part a) of the indicator will measure the percentage of gross internal floor area (m²) of operational buildings, using the condition categories as specified in the Federation of Property Societies (FPS) asset management indicators, recognising assessment categories A and B as satisfactory. These categories are defined as follows:

- A:** Good – Performing as intended and operating efficiently
- B:** Satisfactory – Performing as intended but showing minor deterioration
- C:** Poor – Showing major defects and/or not operating as intended
- D:** Bad – Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure

'Gross internal floor area' is defined as the total internal floor surface area within the external walls. It includes space in cupboards, toilets and cloakrooms etc.

'Operational accommodation' is all property used for the delivery of services. It includes schools and temporary buildings, but excludes rented housing stock and properties available for commercial let.

Part b) of the indicator, reflecting the extent to which buildings are suitable for their use and the delivery of services, uses the SEMP core facts criteria.

The indicator is measured in accordance with the SEMP process and being "suitable for its current use" means assessed as either performing as intended and operating efficiently or performing as intended but showing minor deterioration (ie being in Category A or B of the noted condition categories).

The measurement of suitability requires that properties meet any statutory requirements (including health & safety requirements) as well as the operational requirements of the service. It is important, therefore, that the initial assessment of suitability is undertaken by relevant service management and that these assessments undergo a moderation process with a view to ensuring consistency of approach within the council for properties providing similar services.

If a property is occupied by different services in such a way as to allow the separate assessment of different areas (eg: a swimming pool and library) there is no reason to seek to create a joint assessment and the building can be identified as individual premises. Nevertheless, if a property is occupied jointly by a range of services, in a way that does not allow the separate assessment of floor area, a joint or corporate assessment of suitability will be needed.

The indicator requires each council to assess all of its operational buildings for condition and suitability. Scottish councils are each using an agreed suite of local asset management indicators as part of their asset management processes in accordance with guidance drawn up by the Federation of Property Societies. This guidance recognises that property assessments should be undertaken at least every five years. That is, for 2009/10, assessments should have been undertaken no earlier than April 2005. Where the use to which a property is put changes, a fresh assessment of suitability should be undertaken.

It is expected that the use of "desk top" surveys will reduce as full condition and suitability surveys are completed on all buildings.

Sources

Council property management records

Interpretation

Each council will have its own 'mix' of properties used for service provision. The choice of that mix is a matter for the council and will vary with a range of factors such as settlement pattern, and population density. However, it is important both to staff and service users that those properties are maintained in a reasonable condition and that they are suitable for the service provided.

Factors that may affect the reported performance of councils include:

- variations in the assessment process
- the mix of properties in use
- the extent to which councils are constrained by the use of listed buildings where possible modification is limited.

- 9
- a) *The number of people age 65+ receiving homecare*
 - b) *The number of homecare hours per 1,000 population age 65+*
 - c) *As a proportion of home care clients age 65+, the number receiving:*
 - *personal care*
 - *a service during evenings/overnight*
 - *a service at weekends*

Definitions

The definition of 'home care' for this indicator is identical to that used for the Scottish Executive statistical return on Home Care (Form H1). Home care services bought from other councils or other external providers (e.g. voluntary and private sector providers) should be included without double counting of clients. Equally, services provided for residents of other councils should be excluded

The number of people receiving home care, the hours they receive, and the percentage receiving personal care, an evening or overnight service, and/or a service at weekends, are reported for the week (7 days) containing 31 March at the end of the year. However, if the SE selects a different week for completion of stats return H1, that week should be used so as to provide comparable data.

People receiving home care aged 65+ are service users who were aged 65 years or over on 31 March.

The number of homecare hours should comprise only actual client contact time, rather than staff contact time where this is greater, and should also exclude travel time.

Personal care services are defined as help with using a toilet, washing/bathing, dressing, getting in/out of bed, feeding, medication, a sitting service and other personal help as defined in the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Community Care and Health (Scotland) 2002

Evenings/overnight services are those provided at any time during the period from 7:00pm up to 7:00am, on any day during the relevant week.

The contextual information required for this indicator is the numerators in parts b) and c):

- the total number of home care hours received by all service users aged 65+ during the week
- the number of home care service users aged 65+ receiving personal care in that week
- the number of service users aged 65+ receiving home care during evenings or overnight in that week
- the number of service users aged 65+ receiving home care during the weekend of that week.

Sources

Council's home care records and information systems, including information about services purchased from other providers.

Relevant cells of SE stats return H1.

Interpretation

Home care is one of the most important services available to local authorities to support people with community care needs to remain at home. The indicator measures the overall volume of service for the largest client group, in terms of both the total number of clients and the total number of home care hours provided or purchased per 1,000 people age 65+.

Increasing the flexibility of the service is a key policy objective for both central and local government, to ensure that people receive the type of assistance which they need, when they need it. The indicator measures flexibility in terms of the extent to which:

- care is provided outwith normal working hours to meet clients' needs
- personal care is provided, in addition to help with domestic tasks.

The indicator will be affected by:

- the pattern of need and demand within the council area, influenced by the age-structure of the elderly population, the distribution of poverty and ill health, household composition, and other factors
- the particular needs of people who receive the service
- the balance between home-based and residential care services in the council area.

The indicator only captures 'home care services' which are provided on an hourly basis. Other services which support people at home, such as laundry services, home shopping, community alarms and meals-on-wheels, are not included.

10 *The number of attendances per 1,000 population for*
 - pools
 - other indoor sports and leisure facilities, excluding pools in a combined complex.

Definitions

A council which has established and/or manages recreational facilities through the medium of a trust or company **or/and public private partnership** should report the required information in relation to those facilities.

Where a pool complex includes saunas, steam rooms and/or multi-gyms, independently or together, users of these facilities should be included in the pool attendance figures. However, if these latter facilities are part of a multi-purpose sports complex which has a pool, categorise their users in the attendance figures of 'other indoor sport and leisure facilities'.

Attendance is the total number of visits to pools or other indoor facilities during the year. Attached outdoor facilities are to be excluded. Dual-use facilities are to be included for the specific period of public use.

For group bookings, including school visits, estimates of the number of users should be made if customers are not counted individually. If, on a single visit, a person makes use of a number of facilities, and is charged for each facility used, the use of each facility should be counted as a separate attendance.

Spectators are to be excluded from attendance figures.

Population data should be based on the most recent mid-year estimate published by the Registrar General.

Information in relation to 'dual-use' facilities (ie facilities which are available for public use only at certain restricted times) should be reported for the specific periods of public use.

Source

Council pool and recreation facilities attendance records.

Interpretation

Attendance figures indicate the extent to which pools and indoor leisure facilities are used. This indicator does not record the number of users; a particular figure may reflect high usage by a small number of individuals or low usage by a large number of individuals. The indicator may also conceal wide variations in usage between different facilities within a council.

Important factors that influence attendance levels include:

- number and size of facilities available for use
- the age, quality and range of these facilities
- the extent to which facilities and activities are publicised
- the opening hours, variety, programming and cost of activities on offer
- the location of pools in relation to other competing leisure facilities.

The characteristics of the catchment area for a facility may also have an influence on this indicator.

11 Visits to and use of Museums

- a) The number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums per 1,000 population
- b) The number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population.

Definitions

For part a) of this indicator visits/usage means

- visits by members of the public, including group visits and schools visits
- enquiries (through whatever medium) that mean the public gain knowledge from/about the museum collections
- outreach visits by museum staff to specific audiences.

'Part funded' means where the council provides direct support with running costs, accommodation or other material requirements of the museum such as professional curatorial advice and guidance. Councils should report information on visits/usage at part funded museums in line with figures provided by those museums, recorded in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Museums Council (see below).

Visits should be counted individually and only estimated as a last resort. The Scottish Museums Council has published guidance on the monitoring of 'virtual' museum service users which is available at: http://194.200.63.26/areas_of_work/spi_intro.asp

Enquiries should include object examinations and catalogue searches but exclude those about opening hours, tickets, location or media enquiries, briefings and interviews. Knowledge from or about collections can be provided in person, by letter, telephone, e-mail or web-pages. Website hits require that museum IT systems can differentiate between those users only making general enquiries about the museum and its services, and those searching web pages relating to the resources or collection.

Outreach visits should include visits to schools, and activities such as sending research boxes to schools. Estimates of the number of users should be made if they cannot be counted individually. For schools, the estimates should be made on the council's average primary or secondary class size).

Part b) of the indicator identifies only personal visits to museums by members of the public.

Further guidance on meeting the requirements of this indicator by both councils and the part funded/supported museums can be obtained from the Scottish Museums Council.

Interpretation

Increasing usage by both personal visitors and through other enquiries are important indicators of the value of museum services.

The indicator reports the usage of museums whether managed or supported by councils – reflecting the different mechanisms by which the service is delivered and supported in each council's area.

12 Library usage:

- a) number of visits per 1,000 population
- b) borrowers as a percentage of the resident population.

Definitions

'visits' means visits by members of the public, including group visits and schools visits.

Visits should be counted individually and only estimated as a last resort.

'borrower' means a library member who has taken an item out on loan during the year. A borrower who has taken out more than one loan is to be counted only once.

'resident population': Population data should be based on the most recent mid-year estimates published by the Registrar General.

Source

Library information records.

Interpretation

Part (a) shows the extent to which people use library facilities. It indicates the extent to which library services are reaching their potential service users.

Part (b) shows the average extent of borrowing by those persons who make use of library lending facilities.

13 *The percentage of planning applications dealt with within two months.*

Type of application	Number of applications	Percentage dealt with within two months
Householder		
Non-householder		
Total		

Definitions

Householder applications are as defined in category 1 of Table 2 of the six monthly statement of planning applications returned to the Scottish Executive

Non-householder applications are the remaining elements of Table 2.

'Dealt with' means that a decision has been issued to the applicant.

Time starts when a valid application (ie a fully completed application together with the appropriate fee and all necessary plans) is received by the council, and finishes on the date when the decision notice is issued. Periods of time during which the council is awaiting responses to correspondence etc. between these two dates should be included. Count all applications where decision notices are issued during the reporting year.

Months are to be measured as being from a specific day in one month until the day with the preceding date in the following or subsequent or following months. Thus, for example, if a valid application is received on 23 June and is dealt with by 22 August it counts as being dealt with within two months. However, if it is not dealt with until 23 August, it doesn't.

Source

Development control monitoring system.

Interpretation

In its revised National Planning Policy Guideline 1 (November 2000), The Scottish Executive identified a series of targets for councils in dealing with planning applications. The target levels established include:

Type of Application	2 months	3 months
All applications	80%	85%
Householder applications	90%	95%

The time taken to deal with an application may be affected by a range of factors such as:

- the extent to which councillors have delegated responsibility for approving planning applications to officers (greater delegation will generally allow applications to be processed more quickly)
- the council's policy with regard to negotiations with applicants
- the number a type of applications received
- whether there are any objections to the application
- the number of situations where an applicant needs to submit amended plans in order to enable the planning officer to make a recommendation for approval

- the extent to which applications involve listed building consent or conservation area consent
- the extent to which applications are subject to notification procedures with Scottish Ministers.

14 *Repairs to council dwellings*

- *The number of response repairs completed during the year*
- *The overall percentage of repairs completed within the target times*
- *The repairs categories used by the councils and the target times for each*

Definitions

Include all jobbing repair works based on a schedule of rates contract or day works **except** such work for which no job order was raised because the council:

- had previously chosen to defer the work to a planned maintenance programme or,
- had advised the tenant that the repair work would not be undertaken due to financial constraints or,
- had undertaken the work as void repairs.

'Response time': the target elapsed time between the earliest date or time a request is received in the client department (from either a tenant or council inspector) until the work is satisfactorily completed in the opinion of the client. Only repairs completed within the reporting year are to be included.

A repair has to be done to the client's satisfaction, and thus the indicator captures both efficiency and quality aspects of the repairs service. The housing service has to notify the contractor what work should be done. This means that meeting the target time requires both the housing department and the contractor to work effectively.

Source

Audit trail records of computerised repairs processing system and routine management information reports.

Tenants' handbook, Housing Management Plans and leaflets on repairs services.

Interpretation

The indicator shows the number of response repairs undertaken by the council in the year, and the overall proportion of these undertaken within the target times established by the council for different types of repair.

Each council determines the number of categories required and the timescale for each of them will be based on an assessment of the trade-off between the preferred level of service delivery and the level of resources available. For emergency and urgent repairs, where danger would arise or damage could be caused, there is limited flexibility in target setting. For the majority of work, which is of a more routine nature, shifts in local priorities for any or all categories may result in alteration of target timescales between years. Many councils may use the same term for a repair category (eg 'urgent') but the timescale associated with it may vary between them.

15 *The number and proportion of the council's housing stock being brought up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by criteria.*

Criteria	Number	Percentage
Tolerable standard		
Free from serious disrepair		
Energy efficient		
Modern facilities and services		
Healthy, safe and secure		
Total dwellings meeting SHQS		
Total number of dwellings owned by the council		

Definitions

This indicator should be reported in accordance with information provided to the SHR in the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) progress summary return at the end of the year.

The total number of dwellings owned by the council should be the number at the end of the reporting year.

Details of the assessment criteria and the standards required to meet each of these is set out in a letter from the Scottish Executive Development Department (4 February 2004) available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/housing/msshletter.pdf

Further clarification on elements of the standard was given in a subsequent letter dated 28 July 2004, available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47060/0028724.pdf

Councils should consider this guidance when deciding what elements a dwelling passes or fails on and if overall a dwelling passes or fails the SHQS.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 extends the scope of the tolerable standard by adding two new elements. Following consultation in 2008 the Scottish Government anticipates publishing statutory guidance on the measurement of tolerable standards early in 2009.

Source

Property database

Interpretation

The indicator shows progress against meeting the Scottish Government's target that all council dwellings meet the SQHS by 2015 as part of the broader expectation placed on all landlords.

Each council's SHQS delivery plan will take account of a wide range of factors including available resources, the current state of repair of dwellings and the appropriate sequence of work to meet the target. Therefore, it is likely that considerable improvement in stock condition will be achieved against one or more criteria before dwellings fully meet the overall target standard, particularly in the early years of the delivery plan. Therefore, it may be some time before a council reports significant change in the overall proportion of dwellings fully meeting the standard.

Care must be taken to consider the range and timing of programmed work being undertaken by each council before seeking to compare progress between councils in meeting the standard. Therefore, the indicator shows progress in meeting each of the five criteria as well as the overall standard.

16 *The total annual rent loss (from council dwellings) due to voids, expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due in the year*

Definitions

'Total amount of rent due in the year' is the total annual charges levied by the council in respect of rent and services for the housing stock held on the HRA that are available for let. No deductions are to be made for housing benefit or rent written off.

A 'Void' is any house held on the HRA which has no tenant for any period of time. A property may be counted as a void on one or more occasions during the year.

For this indicator, voids exclude:

- empty properties subject to a Housing Committee decision that they are not to be let because they are surplus to long-term requirements, or to be transferred, disposed of or demolished
- empty properties where an insurance claim was raised due to fire or flood damage
- empty properties awaiting or undergoing major structural works (eg modernisation) during which period it would be unsafe for them to be occupied
- houses held for decanting tenants
- lock-ups and garages.

Source

Property database and rent accounting system.

Interpretation

This indicator reveals the level of rent loss due to houses remaining empty when they are available for letting. The efficiency with which a council undertakes the process of managing changes in tenancy (particularly, the time taken to identify new tenants, and the time taken to identify and carry out any repairs necessary before a new tenant can move in) is an important determinant of performance. Some properties are less desirable than others, and so will remain empty for longer. Some of the factors that may affect the re-letting process and increase rent losses include:

- the condition of the property
- the type of property (eg tenement flat)
- the location of the property
- the level of demand for council housing in an area.

17

a) Stock which is not low demand - the number of dwellings that were re-let within the following time bands.

Void period	Number of houses relet
Less than 2 wks	
2 – 4 wks	
5 – 8 weeks	
9 – 16 weeks	
More than 16 weeks	
Average re-let times	days

b) Low demand stock - the number of dwellings that were re-let within the following time bands.

Void period	Number of houses relet
Less than 2 wks	
2 – 4 weeks	
5 – 8 weeks	
9 – 16 weeks	
17 – 32 weeks	
33 – 52 weeks	
more than 52 weeks	
Average re-let times	days

c) For low demand stock,

i. the number remaining un-let at the year end

ii. the average period these dwellings had been un-let at the year end

d) The number of dwellings considered to be low demand at the year end?
(includes both void and occupied properties)

e) The number at d) above considered to be low demand at the start of the year?
(includes both void and occupied properties)

f) The number at d) above that were not actively being re-let because they were subject to a disposal strategy.

Definitions

Low Demand

A low demand property (void or occupied) is a property where one or more of the following symptoms are exhibited:

- a small or non-existent waiting list for the property
- tenancy offers on a dwelling are frequently refused for reasons other than personal reasons
- higher than normal rates of tenancy turnover for a property in an area.

When considering if a property is low demand the following guidance should be taken into account.

- The definition of a low demand property relates to an individual dwelling (ie house, flat, apartment, tenement etc. (Note: if a complete group of dwellings is identified as low demand, the total number of dwellings must be counted)

- One or more of the criteria must be present for a property to be considered low demand
- A small or non-existent waiting list is determined by comparing the number of applicants on the waiting list for the property against the number of applicants on the waiting lists for other properties in the same letting area i.e. the definition of 'small' may vary across each letting area and is to be determined by each organisation. It should be borne in mind that there might be small or non-existent waiting lists for properties that are not low-demand-this may be due to the fact that there is little turn over for a property, which may act as a deterrent for applicants.
- Tenancy offers 'frequently refused' is defined as applying to properties where the offer of a tenancy is refused 3 or more times before it is let. In considering this definition the reasons for refusal must be for reasons other than personal reasons. 'Personal reasons' are defined as a non-property or letting area related reason.
- 'Higher than normal rates of tenancy turnover' is defined as a property with a higher rate of tenancy turnover than the average for the letting area to which it belongs plus 3 e.g. if the average tenancy turnover for the area is 2 then a property which has had a turnover of 5 tenancies in the reporting year would be higher than normal
- An 'area' is defined as each letting area within the total council area

Low-demand properties that are not actively being re-let must be subject to a Council/Committee decision that they are not to be let because they are surplus to long-term requirements, and a disposal strategy to transfer, dispose of, demolish or reconfigure the properties is in place.

Void/void period

A void is any property held on the HRA that has no tenant for a period of time. A property may be counted as void on more than one occasion during the year. For this indicator, voids exclude:

- empty properties where an insurance claim was raised due to fire or flood damage
- empty properties awaiting or undergoing major structural works (eg modernisation) during which period it would be unsafe for them to be occupied. NB Following completion of major repair work any subsequent void period occurring until the date of re-let should be counted as a void (i.e. any void period from the date of completion of major repair work to the start date of a new tenancy is to be included in the reporting of voids)
- houses held for decanting tenants
- lock-ups and garages
- properties that are or were empty and the subject of a Council/Committee decision that they are not to be let because they are surplus to long-term requirements, or to be transferred, disposed of, demolished or reconfigured.

The void period is the time – measured in calendar days – between the date of termination of a previous tenancy or repossession, and the start date of a new tenancy.

'Less than 2 weeks' means up to 13 days.

2 - 4 weeks means 14 - 28 days

5 - 8 weeks means 29 - 56 days etc.

Re-lets where no void period occurred are to be included in the 'less than 2 weeks' band. One week is 7 calendar days. Mutual exchanges and successions are not to be included.

Source

Council housing property database and rent accounting system.

Interpretation

This indicator shows the efficiency of a council in re-letting properties. It separates out low demand from other properties to allow councils to be compared on an equal basis.

There are many factors that contribute to the problem of low demand properties such as:

- poor or unpopular design or condition of individual properties/blocks or estates
- poor quality or availability of local services

- inaccessible location
- stigma/poor perception of area
- anti-social behaviour/difficult neighbours.

- 10
- a) Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year*
 - b) The percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at the year end, excluding those owing less than £250*
 - c) The proportion of those tenants giving up their tenancy during the year that were in rent arrears*
 - d) The average debt owed by tenants leaving in arrears, as a proportion of the average weekly rent*
 - e) The proportion of arrears owed by former tenants that was either written off or collected during the year.*

Definitions

'Net amount of rent due' ie Net Annual Debit, is the total annual charges levied by the council in respect of rent and services for the housing and other stock held on the HRA, net of both Housing Benefit and rent loss due to voids. (All void houses (do not apply the exclusions in indicator 2 above) are to be included in the calculation of rent loss due to voids for this indicator.)

Rent arrears relating to garages, lock-ups and service charges are to be included in part a) of this indicator.

For all parts of this indicator rent is Net rent and joint tenancies should be counted as single tenants.

Part a) Rent that is lawfully due and is unpaid by current tenants. Exclude from rent arrears all Housing Benefit overpayments.

Part b) The denominator should exclude those tenancies where only a garage is let.

Where a dwelling and a garage (eg lockup) are let separately to the same tenant(s) these should be treated as a single tenancy for the purpose of calculating the number of tenancies.

'More than 13 weeks rent' is more than 13 weeks net rent at year-end.

The indicator is concerned with the council's management of rent arrears. Therefore, rent paid in advance by some tenants, should not be used to offset the overall gross level of arrears shown.

For parts c) and d) exclude those tenants owing less than 1 full week's net rent at the point that the tenancy is given up.

For part d) "average debt owed" is the sum of the debt owed by tenants leaving their tenancy or being evicted (at the point that the tenancies are given up) divided by the number of tenants leaving or being evicted with arrears. The council's average weekly rent is the weighted average weekly rent.

Part e) is based on the value of the former tenant arrears written off at the year end, plus the amount of former tenant arrears collected throughout the year as a percentage of the former tenant arrears at start of the year plus the value of any former tenant arrears (at the point the tenancy was terminated) occurring throughout the year.

NB The average debt owed should not be assessed on the basis of the amount outstanding at the year end since some recovery may have taken place by then.

Source

Rent accounting system and/or Housing Committee minutes.

Interpretation

Part a) of this indicator is a measure of the council’s performance in collecting rent due to it from its current tenants. Actions which a council can take to improve rent collection levels include:

- maximising the methods for ease of payment
- prompt notification of changes to rent levels
- effective management of the rent arrears recovery process (including the timing of action on arrears cases, the effectiveness of communication with tenants, and the efficiency of monitoring procedures)
- debt counselling services.

Not all those who are entitled to Housing Benefit actually claim it. Thus, the level of uptake of Housing Benefit by tenants, which can be influenced by an council’s actions, and the eligibility of tenants for Housing Benefit are also key factors.

Part b) shows the level of serious arrears cases

Parts c) and d) show the extent to which tenants are leaving their tenancy with rent arrears and the extent of those arrears. Good rent management processes will help to keep arrears down and, therefore, reduce the extent to which tenants either leave their tenancies in arrears or are evicted as a result of arrears.

Part e) indicates the extent to which councils are successful in managing arrears owed by former tenants.

19 *Homelessness*
a)

	Council duty to secure	
	permanent accommodation for household	temporary accommodation, provide advice and guidance or take reasonable measures to retain accommodation
i. Number of households assessed during year		
ii. % of decision notifications issued within 28 days of date of initial presentation		
iii. the % who are housed		
iv. % of cases reassessed within 12 months of completion of duty		

b) The proportion of those provided with permanent accommodation in council stock who maintained their tenancy for at least 12 months.

Definitions

Part a) i

The number of households assessed during the year is the number for which assessments were completed during the year regardless of whether the process started late in the previous year.

If the same household applies more than once during the year only its most recent application is included in the number of households assessed.

A household is considered to be the same if the adults and family circumstances (whether the household includes children or not, although the number of children need not be the same) are the same.

Those households for which the council has a duty to secure 'permanent accommodation' are those reported on the Scottish Government HL 1 return as being 'Homeless - priority unintentional' (i.e. category 1 in the HL 1 statutory assessment decision table)

Those households for which the council has a duty to secure 'temporary accommodation, provide advice and guidance or take reasonable measures to retain accommodation' are those reported on the HL 1 return as:

- Homeless – priority intentional
- Homeless – non-priority
- Threatened with homelessness - priority unintentional
- Threatened with homelessness – priority intentional
- Threatened with homelessness – non-priority

(i.e. categories 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the HL 1 statutory assessment decision table)

It is recognised that some assessments will be undertaken leading to a determination that the council has no statutory duty to the applicant(s). For the purpose of this SPI assessment decisions reported on the HL 1 return as follows are excluded:

- Neither homeless or threatened with homeless
- Lost contact before assessment decision
- Withdrew application before assessment decision
- Homelessness resolved prior to assessment decision
- Ineligible for assistance

(i.e. categories 7,10, 11, 9 and 12 in the HL 1 statutory assessment decision table)

Part a) ii

This indicator shows the percentage of all assessments made in the year which were notified to the applicant within 28 days. On the assumption that the assessment date recorded on the HL1 is the date that the applicant was informed of the final assessment decision, this is equivalent to the difference between the assessment date and application date recorded on the HL1 being less than or equal to 28 days.

Interim replies which do not notify the applicant of the final decision of the assessment should not be included in the proportion of notifications made within 28 days.

Also, where contact is lost with the applicant during the process and no final determination is made, they should not be counted in the denominator for calculating the proportion of notifications issued within 28 days.

Part a) iii

The percentage that is re-housed is measured as the proportion of those for whom the council has a duty to secure permanent accommodation and for whom the duty was discharged during the year. For the purpose of this SPI, those re-housed are the same as those for which the action taken by the local authority recorded in question 22 on the HL 1 return is:

- Applicant offered LA/RSL Scottish Secure Tenancy within LA: and accommodation taken up .
- Applicant Offered Private Sector Assured Tenancy: and accommodation taken up .
- Applicant offered "interim accommodation" under the Interim Accommodation Regulations: and accommodation taken up.

(i.e. in categories 1, 3, and 10 in question 22 of the HL 1 – 'Duty discharge action taken by the local authority in respect of this application') - these are the cases where there was a positive outcome from the local authority action.

Exclude from the numerator those cases where assessment leads to a decision to:

- Applicant offered LA/RSL Scottish Secure Tenancy within LA: Accommodation not taken up
- Applicant offered private sector Assured tenancy: accommodation not taken up

- Applicant offered “interim accommodation” under the interim Accommodation Regulations: accommodation not taken up
- Applicant offered a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy(other than below): accommodation taken up
- Applicant offered a short Scottish Secure Tenancy(other than below): accommodation not taken up
- Applicant offered a short Scottish secure Tenancy under paragraph 5A of schedule 6 of the 2001 Act: Accommodation taken up
- Applicant offered a short Scottish secure Tenancy under paragraph 5A of schedule 6 of the 2001 Act: Accommodation not taken up
- Applicant offered section 7 tenancy with support: Accommodation taken up
- Applicant offered section 7 tenancy with support: Accommodation not taken up
- Applicant offered temporary accommodation, advice and assistance only: accommodation taken up
- Applicant offered temporary accommodation, advice and assistance only: accommodation not taken up
- Applicant referred to other LA (under 87 Act):
- Applicant offered advice and assistance only (including measures to retain previous accommodation):
- None of the above:

(i.e. in categories 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 in question 22 of the HL 1 – ‘Duty discharge action taken by the local authority in respect of this application’) - these are the cases where there was not a positive outcome from the local authority action.

Part a) iv

In each category the percentage of cases reassessed within 12 months is the number of new applications within 12 months of a previous application by the same households being closed, as a proportion of the number of applications assessed in each category in part a) i above during the year.

A household is considered to be the same if the adults and family circumstances (whether the household includes children or not, although the number of children need not be the same) are the same.

Unless there are no re-presentations within 12 months of previous applications, the number of cases will be greater than the number of households.

Part b)

This part of the indicator applies only to councils with their own housing stock and shows the proportion of lets either terminated during the year or still in place at the year end where the tenancy was sustained for a period of at least 12 months. To report this, councils will need to identify:

- the number of tenancies provided in its own stock during the previous year to those for which it had a duty to find permanent accommodation
- the number of these tenancies still in place at least 12 months from the date of the start of the tenancy.

Sources

Council homelessness case records and HL1 returns

Interpretation

The level of homelessness that councils have to deal with is less than the actual level of homelessness because of under-reporting. Nevertheless, government initiatives to improve the rights of homeless people and to provide them with greater access to services may be expected to lead to an increase in recorded homelessness applications.

This indicator deals with aspects of the council's duty in relation to the current homelessness legislation. Part a) of the indicator shows:

- the number of assessments undertaken and which of the two groups applicants were assessed as being in. (Note it does not reflect assessments leading to a decision that the council has no duty towards the applicant)
- the efficiency of the council's assessment and notification processes following an applicant's initial presentation
- the proportion of those for which the council recognised a duty to secure permanent accommodation that it was successful in housing during the year, recognising that some will be housed in the following year
- and the effectiveness of the council's actions in the discharge of its duty for each group.

Part b) of the indicator looks at the sustainability of lets which commenced during the previous year for homeless people for whom the council provided permanent accommodation.

The ability of councils to improve both their efficiency and their effectiveness will be affected by, for example, the availability of appropriate accommodation.

- 20 a) *The number of complaints of domestic noise received during the year:*
- i) settled without the need for attendance on site*
 - ii) requiring attendance on site*
 - iii) dealt with under Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004.*
- b) *For those in a)ii and a)iii above, the average time (hours) between the time of the complaint and attendance on site.*

Definitions

'Domestic noise' means noise to which Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act, 2004 (ASBA) applies or would have applied, had the Council resolved to apply that provision. However, such noise may be dealt with using other, pre-existing legislation.

A 'complaint' is an expression of concern to the council about domestic noise in the expectation that the Council will address the matter. Such complaints may be received in a range of different departments or offices. Councils should report all cases settled without the need for attendance on site or requiring attendance on site during the reporting year even if the complaint arose late in the previous year.

For a)ii), subsequent complaints made by the same person about the same noise from the same source **shall not** be recorded as a complaint.

For a)iii), subsequent complaints made by the same person about the same noise from the same source **shall** be recorded as a complaint.

In a)iii) "dealt with" means processed and settled using Part V of ASBA and does not require that formal action took place.

'Settled' means either:

- settled to the satisfaction of the complainant as a result of initial discussion or correspondence between the council and the complainant without the requirement for further investigation or action to check the extent of the problem, or
- settled because there is no means of taking any action, either formal or informal, to address the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant.

'requiring attendance on site' means, in the judgment of the appropriate officer within the council, requiring attendance at the home of the person making the complaint or the home that is the subject of the complaint.

Interpretation

This indicator examines the ways in which councils initially handle/investigate complaints of domestic noise abuse. It does not show the various informal or formal mechanisms used by councils to deal with noise abuse once it has established that a complaint may be justified.

Some of the complaints investigated by councils will result in them finding that the noise is within tolerable limits and that no further action is appropriate.

Each council is responsible for maintaining the level of service it considers appropriate for its area. The noise complaints services offered by councils in Scotland vary widely. In some cases the service is available up to 24 hours, 7 days per week, while in others it may only be available during office hours Monday to Friday.

Councils are increasingly making use of the provisions of the ASBA as an additional means of handling domestic noise incidents. Consequently, the extent to which councils provide services outwith office hours is likely to develop as the provisions of the ASBA are implemented.

It is important that councils respond effectively to noise complaints using the range of legislation available to them. However, the choice of legislation under which any action might be taken is a matter for the service and will, in part be determined by whether or not the council has decided to make use of the provisions of the ASBA

Some councils have close partnership arrangements in place with other organisations such as police forces and housing agencies to provide an integrated service. Consequently, the number of complaints to the council and the number to which it responds may be relatively low.

21 *The number of (Trading Standards) consumer complaints and business advice requests received, and the proportion completed in the following time bands:*

	Number received	% dealt with within 14 days
Consumer complaints		
Business advice requests		

Definitions

Guidance from the Office of Fair Trading issued in August 1998 sets out definitions in its attached annexes for consumer complaints and enquiries (Annex B). Complaints from 'traders acting as consumers', referred to in the OFT guidance, are excluded from this indicator.

In accordance with the definition used by the OFT, a consumer complaint is:

"A contact from an individual or household acting as a consumer:-

- in which the consumer, rightly or wrongly, consider that the goods, services or property are faulty or wrongly described
- in which the goods, services or property are subject to conditions imposed by the supplier which appear to the consumer to be unreasonable
- in which the supplier has adopted an attitude or engaged in a trading practice which the consumer regards as detrimental to his/her other interests."

'Business advice' is advice given in response to enquiries by individual businesses (but not consumers). It includes approaches made in person and inquiries received by letter and telephone, but excludes advice given as part of a routine visit. Exclude talks, exhibitions and press releases. NB A 'business' is as defined by s.137 of the Fair Trading Act, 1973.

For calculation of the indicator, time starts from the date of receipt in the council of all necessary information in relation to the complaint or request for business advice to allow action to commence. 'Completed' means the date on which the council's contact with the consumer and/or the trader concerned finished. All times to be measured in calendar days.

Where a complaint or request for business advice is dealt with on the same day (ie when the council has all information necessary), this should be recorded as 'same day'.

Source

Council's own records.

Interpretation

The indicator provides a measure of the efficiency of the council in dealing with consumer complaints and requests for advice from businesses. Movement in the indicator will be affected by changes in the efficiency of staff in dealing with complaints, the number of staff available for this work, and the number and complexity of complaints and requests for business advice. The indicator relates solely to the time taken to complete a complaint or enquiry irrespective of the outcome.

22 *The percentage of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment.*

Definition

'Considered for maintenance treatment' means that there is likely to be some defect in the condition of the road, but councils will need to carry out further detailed investigation and plan their programme having considered other factors including the impact on spending provision, user delays and safety concerns. The proportion of the road network that should be considered for maintenance is set out below at point 3 and falls into the 'Red and Amber' bands.

Data will be collected by machine-based surveys in accordance with the surface condition assessment of the national network of roads (SCANNER) specification; a copy of the spec. is available on the UK Roads Liaison Group Web Site.

www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/roads/scanner_specification.htm

The UK Road Condition Indicator (RCI) will be adopted as the standard measurement of road condition and will also allow comparison with the Scottish Executive's single carriageway trunk road network and other UK countries.

The RCI works in three stages:

1. The first step is the scoring of key survey parameters, over each 10metre section, in relation to a lower and upper threshold, with a linear weighting applied to values between the thresholds.
2. The second step is to total the parameter scores for each sub section, applying further weighting factors to reflect the importance (or relevance) of the parameter and the reliability of the measurement
3. The third step is to allocate each sub-section to a condition band which reflects the extent to which maintenance is required
 - 'Red' lengths (scoring over 100 points) indicating that maintenance operations are likely to be required
 - 'Amber' lengths (scoring between 40 and 100 points) requiring further investigation and/or monitoring
 - 'Green' lengths (scoring less than 40 points), likely to be in a satisfactory condition although isolate defects may still exist

SCANNER surveys will be carried out in accordance with the requirements specified below, with the proviso that where the sample surveyed is less than 100%, it should be constructed as far as is practicable to be representative of the network as a whole, by ensuring for instance a reasonable geographic distribution of the routes selected. The contractor will randomly select the roads to be surveyed and it is envisaged that surveys will be undertaken between the months of February and October each year to reflect the most favourable climate conditions for surveying.

In regard to Table A below, the direction of survey on:

- 'A' roads should be reversed each alternate year.
- For other classified roads where 50% of the network is surveyed each year in one direction, the remaining 50% should be surveyed the following year, with the direction of

survey being reversed in the 3rd and 4th years to complete the survey of the total network in both directions over 4 years.

- There is no requirement to reverse the direction of survey on unclassified roads. The sample must not include roads previously surveyed within the repeat interval stated.

Table A - Road surveys and intervals

Road Classification	Annual notional % survey in <u>One Direction</u>	Repeat Interval
A	100% of urban & 100% of rural	12 months
B	50% of urban & 50% of rural	24 months
C	50% of urban & 50% of rural	24 months
Unclassified	10% of urban & 10% of rural	48 months *

*The 48 month repeat interval is to ensure that the contractor does not survey the same roads during the period of the contract.

While the surveys will be undertaken on an annual basis, in order to minimise potential fluctuations due to sampling issues rather than true changes in road condition, the RCI in Scotland will be calculated as a rolling indicator, utilising data from the previous 2 years surveys.

Source

While it is envisaged that the surveys will continue to be undertaken through a single Scottish contract under the auspices of a Lead Authority, supported by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS), each council will be responsible for reporting the performance information for their roads.

Interpretation

This indicator shows the percentage of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment (the red band), together with the portion requiring further investigation and/or monitoring (the amber band). The condition of roads will be affected by:

- Budgetary constraints
- Traffic flows/usage
- Weather patterns

23 *The net cost per premises of:*

- refuse collection (combined domestic, commercial and domestic bulky uplift)*
- refuse disposal.*

Definition

The net cost of collection is gross cost i.e. all costs incurred by the local authority including any external contractor charges for a) waste collection and b) disposal, less any income generated from commercial and domestic services for which charges are levied.

The total landfill tax cost to a council in any year is the figure that should be included in the gross cost. Any money, which goes to an environmental body, should not be deducted.

The proceeds from the sale of equipment (e.g. wheeled bins) or other goods (e.g. recyclable materials, - paper, cans etc) do not constitute charges for services and should not therefore be netted off.

The money that a council receives as part of the Scottish Executive strategic waste fund should not be netted off.

The numerator is the net cost and the denominator is the number of premises in the council area.

Councils should follow the CIPFA guidance, as endorsed by LASAAC and apportion overhead costs when determining the cost. The indicator should be calculated using capital charges in accordance with the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice. If difficulty is experienced apportioning capital charges for the indicator, a reasonable basis of apportionment should be agreed with the auditor.

Refuse disposal includes the treatment of waste collected by the council and destined for final disposal in landfill. It includes sorting, compacting, baling, shredding, composting (exclusive of material not landfilled) recycling and incineration. The operation of transfer-loading stations and the provision of civic amenity sites or skips should be regarded as disposal.

Refuse disposal includes any treatment of waste collected by the council which is recycled e.g. paper, cardboard, glass, textiles, ferrous and non-ferrous metal, books, wood etc.

For the purpose of this indicator, it is assumed that 'collection' ends when the specialised refuse collection vehicles discharge waste at either a transfer station, a treatment plant, a material recycling facility or at landfill

The cost of 'capping' at a waste disposal site should be included in the gross cost. However, where there is a one-off cost for capping which makes comparison with previous years look strange, we are asking councils to advise us of this cost separately within the data collection proforma. This will allow us to comment, as appropriate, when we publish the performance data.

Over the next few years it is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the amount of recycling undertaken by councils. The cost of wheelie bins to collect different recycling materials is likely to increase significantly. Councils will have different methods of funding these bins, through, for example, capital or leasing. These costs should be included in the indicator. If appropriate, capital charges should be calculated in accordance with the CIPFA guidance – see p 18.

Source

Council's records - contract record of premises.

Interpretation

This indicator shows how much it costs the council to collect and dispose of refuse.

Most councils use the wheeled bin method of collection. The alternative methods are the uplift of static bins or sacks from either backdoor or kerbside.

The frequency of uplift may affect costs. The great majority of councils collect domestic refuse once a week, though a very small number operate a twice-weekly uplift. Generally, commercial uplifts are carried out two or three times a week. Some councils undertake separate collections of garden refuse and waste paper.

A council that has a population which is scattered over a wide geographical area is likely to incur a higher cost of refuse collection than one where the population is relatively concentrated. However, in urban areas the impact of restricted access to collection points can affect costs.

The method of treatment and/or disposal may affect gross disposal costs depending on the process/procedure used. Councils using transfer stations for access to more distant landfills may have higher disposal costs than if collection vehicles had direct access to the landfill. In the former case however, the higher disposal cost might contribute to a lower comparable collection cost.

Some councils may also have access to existing landfills which although unable to meet the standards prescribed by forthcoming legislation, have sufficient remaining capacity to provide lower disposal costs. In these cases the disposal costs will likely rise in the future when new, more expensive sites are required.

It is recognised that intermediary treatment such as shredding, baling, composting etc will attract higher costs as a result of the capital and running costs.

24 *The percentage of municipal waste collected by the authority during the year that was recycled and composted.*

Definition

Councils should aim to ensure consistent data is provided to both Audit Scotland and SEPA.

Municipal waste includes waste from households and commercial premises, civic amenity sites, street and beach cleaning, parks/gardens and collection of fly tipped waste.

'Recycling' is the council's estimate of the amount of municipal waste it collects from within its area that is being recycled other than by incineration or composting. Where an estimate is made, because, for example, the council has no weighing facilities the methodology for doing so should be agreed with the council's external auditor. Projects directed by the council and funded through, for example, landfill reclaim income, which result in recycling or recovery should be included in the total tonnes/percentage for this category.

'Composted' means the amount of municipal waste which is composted centrally by, or on behalf of, the council. The total should exclude any waste that is subsequently sent for disposal, for example, rejects from the composting process and composted MSW used as a daily top cover. This indicator excludes home composting.

The indicator excludes abandoned/end of life vehicles, industrial waste and road excavation material (planings).

Where it is necessary to estimate the number of tonnes of waste, the methodology for doing so should be agreed with the council's external auditor.

Source

The council's waste disposal records.

Interpretation

The Scottish Government has set interim targets to increase the amount of municipal waste which is recycled or composted to 30 per cent by 2008 and 55 per cent by 2020.

25 *The cleanliness index achieved following inspection of a sample of streets and other relevant land.*

Definition

Relevant streets and land are defined in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 1999. Streets and land refers to those areas that the council is responsible for.

Cleanliness is a measure based on the amount of litter (eg smoking related, sweet wrappers, drinks related, fast food packaging and animal faeces). Weeds and detritus (eg sand, silt and other debris) do not form part of the cleanliness index.

The index provides an indication of the standards of cleanliness in a council's area. There are four grades of cleanliness, defined as follows:

- Grade A - No litter or refuse
- Grade B - Predominantly free of litter and refuse apart from small items
- Grade C - Widespread distribution of litter and refuse with minor accumulations
- Grade D – heavily littered with significant accumulations.

The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 1999 defines maximum response times required when a litter problem is reported within or to a Local Authority. Councils should categorise their areas into 'zones' as illustrated below. When, for example, a grade D in zone 1 is identified, the council has 1 hour to respond and to return the grade D to a grade A.

Category zone	Cleanliness standard grade			
	A	B	C	D
1	Town centres	6 hours	3 hours	1 hour
2	High density residential	12 hours	6 hours	3 hours
3	Low density residential	2 weeks	12 hours	6 hours

Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) has developed criteria against which cleanliness is to be measured. The process is known as the 'local environmental audit and management system' (LEAMS). All councils have received training on the LEAMS process in terms of relevant legislation, survey methodology and calculating the cleanliness index.

All councils will receive seven inspections each year. Four inspections are undertaken by the council's own staff who have been trained in the LEAMS process, a further two inspections are undertaken by the staff of a partner council and KSB undertake an annual validation survey.

The three inputs to the method of calculating the cleanliness index are as follows:

Each council carries out bi-monthly surveys; 4 within their own council's area and two at a partner council. These surveys cover a random sample of 2% of the streets and other relevant sites. KSB randomly samples the 2% from lists of streets and other sites provided by each council.

At six monthly intervals (and at least twice during the reporting year) a partner council undertakes a survey of a random sample of 2% of the streets and other relevant sites. KSB determine who the partner councils are, and also select the random sample of streets for survey.

Keep Scotland Beautiful carries out an annual validation survey. This survey covers a random sample of 2% of the streets and other relevant sites.

At the end of each financial year the overall marks from each survey are totalled and a final cleanliness index figure is calculated for the year.

Total counts of grades A, B, C, and D sites achieved throughout the surveys are used to calculate a cleanliness index between 0 and 100. An area with a cleanliness index of 0 would consist of heavily littered (grade D) sites, whereas a cleanliness index of 100 would represent an area completely free of litter or refuse (all grade A sites).

Sources

Waste management street cleanliness records.

Interpretation

The indicator shows the cleanliness index of a local authority's streets and other relevant land. Various factors will affect the overall cleanliness within a council's area. These will include:

- Council policy on litter picking to a greater extent rather than street sweeping.
- The lack of litter bins, especially in town centres.
- Awareness and education of the public is a key priority and this will be done through actions and campaigns to alert the general public to the problems associated with cleanliness and in particular dog fouling.
- The adoption and implementation of enforcement powers available to councils.

Fire & Rescue Services

The SPI for fire & rescue services is set out in the 2008 Direction.

The Accounts Commission requires that the information reported by fire & rescue services will include information on three specified indicators retained from previous Directions.

These do not cover all the functions against which services are required to report. Neither, are they considered sufficient to demonstrate BV for those functions they do cover. Rather, they provide some continuity from the approach taken in previous Directions for certain areas.

The requirement to demonstrate BV in PPRing has been in place since 2003 and is likely to continue.

The Commission will review both the extent to which it wishes to specify indicators and the content of those indicators regularly. Those specified in the 2008 Direction must be seen as a starting point for future development and change.

Specified Performance Indicators

A *Fire Casualties:*

- *the number of incidents resulting in casualties, per 10,000 population*
- *the number of fatal and non-fatal casualties per 10,000 population*

Definitions

Include **all incidents where fatal and non-fatal casualties**, injured as a direct result of a fire attended by the service, and who required more medical treatment than could be given at the fire-ground, are recorded. Include casualties resulting from late calls.

Those sent for a precautionary check-up (for whom no information is available) and casualties to fire rescue service personnel are excluded.

Source

Population data should be based on the mid-year estimates for the year, published by the Registrar General.

Casualty figures are available from service records

Interpretation

Fire & Rescue services have a duty to offer advice on fire prevention and safety in buildings and to undertake education and promotional activities amongst the community. This indicator, and indicator 2 (below), gives an indication of the effectiveness of services' fire prevention and fire safety programmes.

B *The number of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population.*

Definitions

Accidental dwelling fires are those incidents recorded as such in Section 5 of the FDR1 return. Exclude fire incidents categorised as malicious, deliberate, doubtful or not known.

Dwelling is as defined in Section 3 of the FDR1 form, except that the figures will exclude caravans and mobile homes, and houses in multiple occupation.

Source

Population data should be based on the mid-year estimates for the year, published by the Registrar General.

Records of dwelling fires are available from service records.

Interpretation

See (A) above. The number of dwelling fires is affected by a variety of factors, including socio-demographic factors and the extent to which fire precautions are installed in buildings.

 *The average number of:*

- *rider shifts lost due to sickness and light duties per fire officer*
- *working days lost to sickness per employee for all other staff.*

Definitions

This indicator is defined in accordance with the definition contained in 'Value for Money in public sector corporate services' (June 2007) published on behalf of the joint UK audit bodies by the National Audit Office and is available at: www.public-audit-forum.gov.uk

It has been adopted across much of the public and private sectors as the standard way of reporting sickness absence, and, therefore, facilitates comparison across a wider range of organisations.

Part a) of this indicator only relates to whole-time fire-fighters. Retained and volunteer fire-fighters should be excluded.

Rider shifts

Riders are the uniformed staff who crew fire-fighting appliances. Fire & Rescue services vary in the use of riders of different ranks (particularly station officers) to crew pumps or appliances. All staff who crew appliances should be counted.

Riders work in a shift system, and there are different types of shift systems for crewing appliances. The majority of services in Scotland operate a whole-time shift system, with fire-fighters on duty at all times of the day and night (4 shifts). Alternatively a service may operate a day-crew system, with whole-time fire-fighters on duty during the day and on call at other times (in which case, for the purposes of this indicator, only the day shift should then be counted).

Shifts lost to sickness and light duties

Provide separate figures for shifts lost to sickness and shifts lost to light duties.

'Sickness absence' is defined as an absence from the place of employment because of the employee's illness or injury for which sick leave entitlement is used. This may include self certification, absence supported by a doctor's certificate, long-term sickness absence, and industrial injury. Care needs to be taken not to include authorised absence which is not sickness absence, for example, compassionate leave, career leave and special leave/unpaid leave, maternity and paternity leave, and maternity support.

Shifts lost to light duties are those shifts where duties, other than rider duties, are assigned for medical reasons (including maternity reasons).

Part b)

Care should be taken not to include:

- any non-uniformed staff who are accounted for as employees of a council and included in indicator CM1
- authorised absence which is not sickness absence, for example, compassionate leave, career leave and special leave/unpaid leave, maternity and paternity leave, and maternity support.

For each calculation the numerator is the total number of shifts/working days lost due to sickness absence, including industrial injury, irrespective of whether this is self-certified, certified by a GP or long-term. For part-time staff, services should calculate the FTE for both the numerator and denominator on a consistent basis. For example, where the standard working week for full time employees is 36.25 hours, someone working a 15 hr week counts as 41% FTE

Include all permanent employees, and exclude agency staff and staff on maternity or paternity leave. However, temporary staff and staff on fixed term contracts who have been employed for over a year should be considered permanent.

The denominator is the average number of FTEs employed during the financial year. Working days/shifts, means days/shifts scheduled for work after holidays/leave days have been excluded.

In the instance of an employee reporting sick part way through a working day/shift, authorities should record the information to the nearest half-day/shift.

Include days lost through sickness due to disability or long term sickness even if the staff are not paid. Only days which form part of an employee's normal working week should be counted for sick leave.

Example

Total number of days lost per year through sickness absence = 700

Total number of FTE staff = 500

Days lost per employee is $700 / 500 = 1.4$

Source

Service statistical returns and human resources records

Interpretation

The indicator looks at the effectiveness of the HR function in terms of impact on the overall levels of sickness absence in the service through development of processes and procedures, and training for managers. Services should aim to reduce the number of shifts/days lost through sickness absence over time.

Sickness rates tend to vary considerably between services, and the rates for operational staff within the fire & rescue service are generally high in comparison with the public sector average. This is explained in part by the hazardous nature of the work, and the special needs in respect of fitness.

Police Services

The SPI for police services is set out in the 2008 Direction. It requires each force to report in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Policing Performance Framework.

More detail on the framework is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/Police/Performance>

The 2008 Direction

Introduction

by John Baillie, Chair of the Accounts Commission

Each December, the Accounts Commission considers what performance information it will direct local authorities to report on in the following financial year. This year, the shifting local government environment has provided a considerable challenge for Commission members in deciding how best to fulfil our responsibilities.

Before putting forward our proposals we wanted to see how things were changing and to reflect on the developing scrutiny arrangements, single outcome agreements between the Scottish Government and councils and the proposals for the next stage of the Best Value audit regime. Developments continue apace and in giving this year's Direction, the Commission has taken account of progress in each of these areas, as well as the responses to our recent consultation paper. We have also taken on board comments about some of our long standing SPIs that are no longer as relevant as they once were.

What we have decided to do, is align SPI arrangements with the responsibility authorities have under Best Value for selecting and using performance information to drive continuous improvement in services, and for reporting on those aspects of performance that are of most importance to local communities, to service users and to citizens. Since the BV legislation was introduced in 2003, local authorities have had a duty to demonstrate to their citizens that they are securing the best use of public resources and achieving a proper balance between costs and quality. The best councils have been doing this, but the Commission has long recognised the need in most local authorities for considerable improvement in both performance management and public reporting.

The SPIs allow some limited comparisons to be made over time and, where appropriate, between councils. But other information is also useful for demonstrating achievement against expectations. Reports from other scrutiny bodies for example, together with information about service costs, local concerns and priorities and user satisfaction with services, all add to the broader picture and help to demonstrate service quality and improvement.

In all that has been said about the recent concordat, and the single outcome agreements with councils and their community planning partners, it has always been absolutely clear that councils still need to report on the quality, accessibility and value for money of all their services as part of their Best Value duties. This is also true of Police and Fire & Rescue services.

The 2008 Direction

This year's Direction is set out in the following pages and signals a major change from what has gone before. The Commission has significantly reduced the range of information it specifies that all councils must report, and has agreed not to introduce any new indicators relating to specific functions. Nevertheless, the Commission wants to see councils, as part of their performance management and reporting activities, using a greater range of information on:

- corporate issues, such as equalities and asset management, and how these impact on overall service delivery
- service cost and overhead management and how this drives more efficient performance
- the impact made by front line services and how this relates to the service user and local communities

In particular, the Commission wants to see a greater understanding of cost information by councils and this being used in performance management and reporting to improve services. This is reflected in our decision to undertake a national study in this area which Audit Scotland will be starting early in 2009.

The challenge for authorities now is to fully recognise and meet the responsibilities placed on them by the 2003 Best Value legislation and demonstrate publicly that they are securing Best Value, including a proper balance between quality and cost.

We expect further developments in the national performance management and reporting arrangements in future years. The Commission will continue to monitor the local government scrutiny environment and look at how best to use the responsibility it has on behalf of the public, to hold local authorities to account and help them improve.

I wish you well in your efforts during the coming year.

John Baillie

Chair of the Accounts Commission for Scotland

December 2008

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1992
THE PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION
(STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE) DIRECTION 2008

1. This Direction is given by the Accounts Commission for Scotland (“the Commission”) under section 1(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1992, which requires the Commission to direct relevant bodies to publish such information relating to their activities in any financial year or other specified period as will, in the Commission’s opinion:
“facilitate the making of appropriate comparisons (by reference to the criteria of cost, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and of securing best value in accordance with section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003) between –
 - i. the standards of performance achieved by different relevant bodies in that financial year or other period; and***
 - ii. the standards of performance achieved by such bodies in different financial years or, as the case may be, other periods”***
2. This Direction is given to all local authorities and to joint committees and joint boards, as defined by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and amended by the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.
3. Each of the bodies referred to in paragraph 2 shall, in accordance with section 13 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and associated regulations and guidance from Scottish Ministers:
 - a. publish the information specified in the schedule to this Direction for all those activities which are carried out by the body
 - b. ensure that publication facilitates the making of comparisons where appropriate and possible with performance in 2008/9.
4. The period for which the information must be published is the financial year ending 31st March 2010.
5. In determining the information to be reported, authorities should consider and, where appropriate, reflect:
 - i the criteria set out in 1a) above recognising the need to balance efficiency & effectiveness information with cost and economy information
 - ii achievement against their single outcome agreements with the Scottish Government

- iii the performance reporting requirements of any other legislation
 - iv indicators/measures in relevant suites or frameworks of performance information determined by government, regulatory agencies, professional associations or others
 - v national standards and targets for service delivery
 - vi local service priorities and objectives
 - vii service user views.
- 6 In the schedule, the term ' Best Value' shall be interpreted in accordance with the definition and requirements of Part 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Schedule

Councils

Corporate management

SPI 1: Each council will report a range of information, sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in relation to:

- responsiveness to its communities
- revenues and service costs
- employees
- assets
- procurement
- sustainable development
- equalities and diversity.

Service performance

SPI 2: Each council will report a range of information sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in providing the following services (in partnership with others where appropriate):

- benefits administration
- community care
- criminal justice social work
- cultural & community services covering at least sport & leisure, museums, the arts and libraries
- planning (both environmental and development management)
- the education of children
- child protection and children's social work
- housing & homelessness
- protective services including environmental health, and trading standards
- roads and lighting
- waste management services

The range of information to be reported in SPIs 1 & 2 above will include achievement against the following specific indicators:

- 1 The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for:
 - Teachers
 - All other local government employees.
- 2 The number and percentage of the highest paid 2% and 5% of earners among council employees that are women.
- 3 The number of council buildings from which the council delivers services to the public and the percentage of these in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to people with a disability.

- 4 The gross cost per case for benefits administration.
- 5 The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax.
- 6 The income due from Council Tax for the year, net of reliefs and rebates, and the percentage of that which was received during the year
- 7 The number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid.
- 8 The proportion of operational accommodation that is:
 - in a satisfactory condition
 - suitable for its current use.
- 9 Home Care
 - a) The number of people age 65+ receiving homecare
 - b) The number of homecare hours per 1,000 population age 65+
 - c) As a proportion of home care clients age 65+, the number receiving:
 - personal care
 - a service during evenings/overnight
 - a service at weekends.
- 10 The number of attendances per 1,000 population for:
 - pools
 - other indoor sports and leisure facilities, excluding pools in a combined complex.
- 11 The number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums per 1,000 population and the number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population.
- 12 The number of visits to council libraries per 1,000 population
- 13 The number of householder and non-householder planning applications determined during the year and the proportion of each that were dealt with within two months.
- 14 Response repairs to council houses:
 - The number of response repairs completed during the year
 - The overall % of repairs completed within the target times
 - The repairs categories used by the council and the target times for each
- 15 The number and proportion of the council's housing stock meeting to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by criteria.

Criteria	Number	Percentage
Tolerable standard		
Free from serious disrepair		
Energy efficient		
Modern facilities and services		
Healthy, safe and secure		
Total dwellings meeting SHQS		
Total number of dwellings owned by the council		

- 16 The total annual rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due in the year.

17 Managing tenancy change

a) Stock which is **not low demand** - the number of dwellings that were re-let within the following time bands.

Void period	Number of houses relet
Less than 2 wks	
2 – 4 wks	
5 – 8 weeks	
9 – 16 weeks	
More than 16 weeks	
Average re-let times	days

b) **Low demand stock** - the number of dwellings that were re-let within the following time bands.

Void period	Number of houses relet
Less than 2 weeks	
2 – 4 weeks	
5 – 8 weeks	
9 – 16 weeks	
17 – 32 weeks	
33 – 52 weeks	
more than 52 weeks	
Average re-let times	days

c) For low demand stock,

- i) the number remaining un-let at the year end
- ii) the average period these dwellings had been un-let at the year end

d) The number of dwellings considered to be low demand at the year end? (includes both void and occupied properties)

e) The number at d) above considered to be low demand at the start of the year? (includes both void and occupied properties)

f) The number at d) above that were not actively being re-let because they were subject to a disposal strategy.

18 Housing Rent arrears

- Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year
- The percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at the year end, excluding those owing less than £250
- The proportion of those tenants giving up their tenancy during the year that were in rent arrears
- The average debt owed by tenants leaving in arrears, as a proportion of the average weekly rent
- The percentage of arrears owed by former tenants that was either written off or collected during the year.

19 Homelessness

	Council duty to:	
	secure permanent accommodation for household	secure temporary accommodation, provide advice and guidance or take reasonable measures to retain accommodation
a i) Number of households assessed during year		
a ii) % of decision notifications issued within 28 days of date of initial presentation		
a iii) the % who are housed		
a iv) % of cases reassessed within 12 months of completion of duty		
b) The proportion of those provided with permanent accommodation in council stock who maintained their tenancy for at least 12 months.		

20 Domestic noise complaints

- a) The number of complaints of domestic noise received during the year:
- i) settled without the need for attendance on site
 - ii) requiring attendance on site and not dealt with under Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004
 - iii) dealt with under Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004.
- b) For those in a)ii and a)iii above, the average time (hours) between the time of the complaint and attendance on site.

21 The number of trading standards complaints and advice requests received, and the proportion completed within 14 days:

	Number received	% completed within in 14 days
Consumer complaints		
Business advice requests		

22 The percentage of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment.

23 The net cost per premises for:

- refuse collection
- refuse disposal.

24 The percentage of municipal waste collected during the year that was recycled or composted

25 The cleanliness index achieved following inspection of a sample of streets and other relevant land.

Fire & Rescue Services

SPI 3: Each Fire & Rescue service will report a range of information on its performance sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in relation to:

- community fire safety
- intervention in response to emergency incidents
- staff
- equalities & diversity

The range of information to be reported will include the following specific information:

- a) Fire casualties
 - the number of incidents resulting in casualties per 10,000 population
 - the number of fatal and non-fatal casualties per 10,000 population.
- b) The number of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population.
- c) The average number of:
 - rider shifts lost due to sickness and light duties per fire officer
 - working days lost to sickness absence per employee for all other staff.

Police Services

SPI 4: Each police service will report its performance in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Policing Performance Framework.

Comparable Indicators: 2007 and 2008 Directions

2007 Direction	2008 Direction
Corporate Services Indicator 1	Indicator 1
Corporate Services Indicator 3	Indicator 2
Corporate Services Indicator 4	Indicator 3
Benefits Administration Indicator 1	Indicator 4
Corporate Services Indicator 5	Indicator 5
Corporate Services Indicator 6	Indicator 6
Corporate Services Indicator 7	Indicator 7
Corporate Services Indicator 8	Indicator 8
Adult Social Work Indicator 4	Indicator 9
Cultural & Community Services Indicator 1 & 2	Indicator 10
Cultural & Community Services Indicator 3	Indicator 11
Cultural & Community Services Indicator 5a	Indicator 12
Development Services Indicator 1	Indicator 13
Housing Services Indicator 1	Indicator 14
Housing Services Indicator 2	Indicator 15
Housing Services Indicator 3	Indicator 16
Housing Services Indicator 4	Indicator 17
Housing Services Indicator 5	Indicator 18
Housing Services Indicator 7	Indicator 19
Protective Services Indicator 1	Indicator 20
Protective Services Indicator 4	Indicator 21
Roads & Lighting Indicator 1	Indicator 22
Waste Management Indicator 1	Indicator 23
Waste Management Indicator 3	Indicator 24
Waste Management Indicator 4	Indicator 25
Fire & Rescue Service Indicator 1	Indicator A
Fire & Rescue Service Indicator 1	Indicator B
Fire & Rescue Service Indicator 1	Indicator C

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