

# Update on performance for the Planning Inspectorate

In our [previous performance update](#), we explained the reasons for the time taken to deal with some appeals. These included a rise in the demand for our services and a corresponding lack of supply of inspectors.

The key priority in improving performance has therefore been a recruitment drive to employ more decision makers.

An initial recruitment exercise was undertaken in November 2018 which focused on bringing new inspectors into the organisation. This also included recruiting against a new model of decision making by employing appeals planning officers (APOs) to examine cases and make recommendations on less complex work. Based on this recommendation, some of our more senior and experienced inspectors then make the formal decisions. This recruitment process has seen more than 80 new inspectors and APOs joining the Planning Inspectorate. However, we still need more inspectors and have recently completed another targeted recruitment exercise to recruit more senior inspectors. Our aim is to complete this exercise with the new inspectors in post by the autumn.

The recruitment of permanent staff has also been supplemented by using more non-salaried inspectors. We are now busy focusing our resource in all casework areas with the aim of increasing performance to meet our targets.

We are beginning to see some clear signs of recovery. At the start of the appeal process, new planning appeals are now being assigned to an inspector with a median timescale of under 4 weeks. This has fallen from a high of 13 weeks due to more inspectors being available following the recruitment process.

Over the next few months we are likely to see a variance in performance as some of our older casework (including telephone kiosk appeals) passes through the system and is determined. Outside of these cases, we are currently seeing cases being determined in median timescales of around 22 weeks.

We remain confident that overall end to end performance, for determining planning appeals via written representations, should meet a target of 18 weeks before December 2019. This makes up around 90% of our 578 casework and around half of all our total overall casework. For all other casework we are expecting to recover by an uplift in performance of around 30% (compared to November 2018), after April 2020.

---

# Norwich City Council joins HM Land Registry's Local Land Charges Register

One year on from the launch of the centralised Local Land Charges Register, Norwich City Council is the latest local authority to migrate its data to it, providing a quicker and simpler service for customers.

Laura McGillivray, Chief Executive Officer at Norwich City Council, said:

Working with HM Land Registry has been a positive and collaborative process throughout. Some of our local land charges data was computerised but most was held in paper records, some going back to the 1950s. By updating and digitising all our local land charges data, we are providing confidence in the accuracy of the data and helping to improve the efficiency of buying and selling property in the Norwich area.

Karina Singh, Director of Transformation at HM Land Registry, said:

People buying property in Norwich will now have access to instant local land charges search results, meaning it will be quicker and simpler to buy and sell a house across the area. I am delighted that homebuyers across Norwich will benefit from this revolutionary new national Local Land Charges Register.

As part of HM Land Registry's digital transformation, which aims to make homebuying quicker, simpler and cheaper, in the last year the organisation has launched its innovative [digital mortgage](#) service, where millions of people can now sign their mortgage online and on the move through their phone or tablet. We have also successfully tested buying a house using blockchain technology and won [awards](#) for improving systems across the organisation.

Norwich City Council is the sixth local authority to migrate its local land charges data to the new digital register since it was launched in July 2018. The other migrated local authorities are:

- Warwick District Council
- Liverpool City Council
- the City of London Corporation
- Blackpool Council
- Council of the Isles of Scilly

Anyone can get instant online local land charges search results via GOV.UK using the [Search for Local Land Charges service](#). Customers will need to continue to submit CON29 enquiries to the local authority.

HM Land Registry's business customers can use their existing portal and Business Gateway channels or their usual search providers to access Local Land Charges data for those local authorities which have migrated.

### **Watch a video about the Local Land Charges service**

[Watch our short video about the Local Land Charges service.](#)

For more information, read about the [Local Land Charges Programme](#).

---

## **Capacity Market auction parameters: letter from BEIS to National Grid ESO, July 2019**

This letter from the Interim Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth, Chris Skidmore MP, to National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO) setting out the parameters (including the volume of capacity to be secured and de-rating factors for interconnectors) for the T-1 auction for 2020 to 2021 and the T-4 auction for 2023 to 2024, and the provisional parameters for the T-3 auction for 2022 to 2023, should it be scheduled.

The Annex provides full details of auction parameters and the interconnector de-rating factors.

---

## **Capacity Market auction determination: letters from BEIS to National Grid ESO, June and July 2019**

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Letters informing NG:ESO of determination to hold Capacity Market auctions for delivery years 2020 to 2021, 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024.

---

# Terminally ill benefit claimants deserve a fresh and honest evaluation of the way the system supports them

Citing her own personal experiences, Amber Rudd has asked the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to set up an honest and in depth evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life and those with severe conditions.

While Special Rules for Terminal Illness mean that if you are living with a terminal illness you can have your benefit claim fast tracked and paid at enhanced rates many charities have campaigned for the rules to be changed.

Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Having a life limiting illness or severe condition can cause unimaginable suffering for the patient and for their loved ones.

Having seen it in my own family I know that the last thing you need is additional financial pressures or unnecessary assessments.

So that's why today I am beginning work on a fresh and honest evaluation of our benefits system so that I can be sure that people who are nearing the end of their life are getting the best possible support.

I hope that this comprehensive evaluation of how we treat those with severe conditions and terminal illnesses will help ensure these vulnerable people get the support they need from our benefits system.

I want people to have confidence in what we do at the DWP, ensuring no one is suffering unnecessary hardship at this especially difficult time.

Not all doctors understand the system or feel confident they are making the right diagnosis for their patients, and the rules are often seen as favouring those living with cancer when other heart breaking illnesses can also limit life.

For those living with the most severe or progressive conditions, benefit processes have recently been made simpler, moving them out of unnecessary reassessments.

However, the Work and Pensions Secretary wants to look again to make sure that these processes are working effectively and to see if more can be done to improve engagement with the department for claimants living with the most

severe conditions.

Amber Rudd yesterday visited the Macmillan Horizon Centre cancer support in Brighton to begin conversations with stakeholders and today will host a number of charities at the DWP, including Macmillan and Hospice UK.

She has also ordered the department to seek the views of a wide range of people, including patients, doctors and nurses.

The review will include 3 strands of research:

- hearing directly from claimants and charities about their first-hand experiences
- considering international evidence to find out what works in other nations and the support they provide
- reviewing current DWP performance to better understand how our Special Rules for Terminal Illness and Severe Conditions processes operate and perform

Amber Rudd will also seek senior medical input to help shape the evaluation and review the evidence gathered. Professor Bee Wee, NHS National Clinical Director for End of Life Care for NHS England is attending today's roundtable.

Around 500,000 people die in England each year and around three-quarters of those deaths are expected – that is they are not sudden or unexpected. There are many more people who are living with severe or progressive health conditions.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5126

Follow DWP on: