

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2000/2001

Education services

Comparing the performance of Scottish councils



Introduction

Each year, councils publish a range of information to show people how well they are providing their services and how they compare with other councils.

This leaflet contains information on five indicators relating to councils' management of education services in 2000/2001. They are:

- the provision of pre-school education
- the size of primary school classes
- the occupancy levels of primary schools
- the occupancy levels of secondary schools
- the assessment of special educational needs.

Other pamphlets published by the Commission cover:

- Benefits, Finance and Corporate issues
- Environmental and Regulatory services
- Fire and Police services
- Housing services
- Leisure and Library services
- Social work services

The Commission also publishes:

- a comprehensive compendium of the information for all the services for which there are performance indicators
- council profiles analysing indicators on a council-by-council basis.

Using the information

For each activity we have set out why some of the differences in performance may have arisen. We also highlight particular features of the information – for example, the range in performance achieved by different councils or the overall change in councils' performance over time.

Several factors affect the way a council performs its activities. You need to be aware of these in order to understand why results may vary. Some of these factors are outwith the control of the council – for example, population size and density, geographical area, and the mix between urban and rural settlements. Others may be specific to a particular service or the groups of people it serves. These local factors may mean that a council with a performance which, at first sight, appears to be worse than that of another has, in fact, done better given the circumstances it faces.

In this pamphlet we have shown information for councils for 2000/2001, and where appropriate made comparison with previous years.

Key

Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission have reviewed councils' arrangements for producing the performance information. In the tables and charts shown in this pamphlet, an asterisk (*) against a council's name indicates that the auditor expressed doubts about the reliability of the council's arrangements for producing the information.

Indicator 1

In 2000/2001, 95.8% of four-year-olds had a grant-aided place in pre-school education compared to 87.2% of eligible three-year-olds. While the proportion of four-year-olds in pre-schooling remains the same as in the previous year, the proportion of three-year olds has risen sharply from less than 75%.

Indicator 2

Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway and the three Islands councils were the only councils to report that none of their classes with P1 to P3 pupils had 31 or more pupils. South Ayrshire and West Lothian reported that over 15% of the classes containing P1 to P3 pupils had more than 30 pupils.

Indicator 3

The number of primary schools in Scotland continued to fall in 2000/2001 to 2,264, 16 fewer than in 1999/2000 and 44 fewer than in 1996/97. Of these, just under a third were reported as 60% occupied or less, a proportion similar to recent years. Overall, just over 7% of primary schools were reported as having some level of over-occupation (ie, 101% occupied or more).

Indicator 4

In 2000/2001, there were 388 secondary schools in Scotland, 14 fewer than in 1996/97 following local government re-organisation. Of these, less than one in six were reported as 60% occupied or less, slightly fewer than last year. Just over 15% of secondary schools were also reported as having some level of over-occupation.

Indicator 5

Councils again reported a reduction in the average time taken for a special educational needs assessment, down to 28 weeks compared to 34 weeks two years earlier. Six councils (Angus, Clackmannanshire, Highland, Perth & Kinross, Orkney Islands and Stirling) had an average time for an assessment of less than 20 weeks.

Indicator 1: Pre-school provision

The percentage of four-year old children and of three-year-old children who received grant-aided pre-school education from their council or other providers.

Of these children, the proportion who received fewer than five education sessions per week.

This indicator identifies the extent to which satisfactory provision is made and utilised for children eligible to receive government grant-funded pre-schooling in the two years before entering Primary 1. For each council area, it shows:

- the proportion of children with a pre-school education place
- the extent to which these places are provided through either the council or other providers
- the extent to which children with a place receive five sessions per week (eg, five mornings or five afternoons).

Other providers include those in the private, voluntary and independent sectors.

Points to bear in mind

Guidance on the planning of pre-school education and childcare and the establishment of childcare partnerships, issued by the then SOEID in October 1998, identifies a government policy goal to:

“secure a quality part-time pre-school education place for (a) every pre-school year child whose parents want one by the winter of 1998/99; and (b) for every three-year-olds whose parents want a place by 2002”.

Factors affecting the number of sessions received by children will include:

- parents’ preferences – they may prefer that their children, particularly three-year-olds, attend for less than five sessions per week.
- councils’ policies – particularly where capacity is tight, councils may offer children, again particularly three-year-olds, a place with fewer than five sessions per week.

All providers of government grant-funded places are registered and inspected against quality standards and are required to follow the curriculum framework for three to five-year-olds.

In this indicator, the term ‘four-year-olds’ refers to children in their pre-school year. However, ‘eligible three-year-olds’ relates only to those ante-pre-school-year children who were three years old before the beginning of the 2000/2001 school year and eligible for a place in the first term.

Several councils have estimated the number of eligible three-year-old children based on information from the General Register Office for Scotland (GRO). However, where migration has been significant and the population is higher than that estimated by the GRO, the proportion of children with a place may be over- reported.

A full report on the provision of pre-school education across Scotland ‘*A Good Start – Commissioning pre-school education*’ was published by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission in March 2001. The report is available from Audit Scotland or from our web site: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications

COMMENTARY

General provision

In 2000/2001, 95.8% of four-year-olds had a grant-aided place in pre-school education compared to 87.2% of eligible three-year-olds (Table 1a). While the proportion of four-year-olds in pre-schooling remains the same as in the previous year, the proportion of three-year olds has risen sharply from less than 75%.

The proportion of four-year-olds in a grant-aided place ranged from 88.4% in Glasgow to 100% in nine council areas. However, the proportion of eligible three-year-olds in a place varied more widely, from less than 72% in West Lothian to 100% in seven councils. Five councils (Eilean Siar, Perth & Kinross, Shetland Islands, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian) reported that fewer than 80% of the eligible three-year-olds in their area took up a grant-aided place.

Provision of five sessions per week

The overall proportion of four-year-olds who were in pre-school education and who received fewer than five sessions rose slightly to 4% and five councils (Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, Eilean Siar and Shetland Islands) all reported that more than 10% of four-year-olds with a place received less than five sessions per week. Three councils (Aberdeen City, Orkney Islands and Perth & Kinross) all reported that no four-year-old children with places received less than five sessions per week.

The overall proportion of eligible three-year-olds receiving less than five sessions per week fell from just over 29% to just over 25%. A larger proportion of eligible three-year-olds than four-year-olds received fewer than five sessions a week in every council except Perth & Kinross, which reported that all children in pre-school education also received five sessions. In two council areas (Argyll & Bute and Dumfries & Galloway) none of the eligible three-year-olds in a place received five sessions per week.

Table 1a: The percentage of children in a grant-aided pre-school place

COUNCIL	Council Providers		All providers			
	Three-year olds (%)	Four-year olds (%)	Three-year olds (%)		Four-year olds (%)	
	2000/2001	2000/2001	2000/2001	1999/2000	2000/2001	1999/2000
Aberdeen City	50.8	77.7	83.8	72.5	95.2	87.0
Aberdeenshire	20.9	74.1	85.6	77.4	94.0	100.0
Angus	48.6	83.4	83.3	80.2	97.9	94.0
Argyll & Bute	42.9	51.2	93.7	92.0	99.9	100.0
Clackmannanshire	64.7	91.5	100.0	96.9	99.8	97.7
Dumfries & Galloway	32.2	83.8	89.6	73.0	96.5	100.0
Dundee City	79.2	85.2	96.2	97.5	98.1	100.0
East Ayrshire	62.8	90.7	82.0	69.1	94.2	99.1
East Dunbartonshire	40.8	53.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
East Lothian	61.9	84.2	85.9	80.5	96.7	100.0
East Renfrewshire	55.8	82.0	100.0	97.5	100.0	100.0
Edinburgh, City of	61.2	70.6	92.7	74.5	94.7	88.3
Eilean Siar	0.0	6.6	76.6	89.0	90.7	100.0
Falkirk	74.9	92.7	83.9	81.5	97.7	93.3
Fife	63.9	94.2	82.5	50.2	98.7	99.1
Glasgow City	67.3	73.6	87.5	83.0	88.4	89.9
Highland	18.7	75.8	80.5	36.4	98.2	98.9
Inverclyde	65.9	71.1	86.3	81.1	94.7	95.3
Midlothian	74.7	88.8	98.4	79.0	100.0	100.0
Moray	30.6	58.9	100.0	99.4	100.0	100.0
North Ayrshire	47.3	70.9	85.9	78.6	99.2	98.5
North Lanarkshire	69.1	78.2	85.8	79.8	93.9	91.0
Orkney Islands	50.4	97.4	96.6	60.0	100.0	99.3
Perth & Kinross	44.1	77.2	74.1	63.1	100.0	100.0
Renfrewshire	64.6	72.4	92.7	81.2	94.4	95.1
Scottish Borders	47.2	81.0	100.0	95.3	100.0	100.0
Shetland Islands	37.8	68.4	79.7	85.0	90.3	92.1
South Ayrshire	61.4	81.2	100.0	71.9	100.0	100.0
South Lanarkshire	54.6	75.1	73.3	54.6	99.3	94.4
Stirling	52.9	84.0	97.5	92.8	99.7	100.0
West Dunbartonshire	88.1	93.1	100.0	95.9	100.0	100.0
West Lothian	58.4	82.8	71.6	40.5	88.5	98.8
All Scotland	55.8	77.7	87.2	74.2	95.8	95.7

Table 1b: The percentage of children in a grant-aided place who received fewer than five sessions per week

COUNCIL	Three year olds (%)		Four year olds (%)	
	2000/2001	1999/2000	2000/2001	1999/2000
Aberdeen City	14.7	9.6	0.0	0.5
Aberdeenshire	58.7	62.0	3.9	1.8
Angus	28.3	30.6	4.9	3.2
Argyll & Bute	100.0	100.0	10.4	9.0
Clackmannanshire	17.5	17.1	3.7	3.3
Dumfries & Galloway	100.0	100.0	15.5	16.3
Dundee City	6.1	7.3	1.3	0.8
East Ayrshire	21.6	23.6	0.8	0.4
East Dunbartonshire	44.3	28.0	18.5	9.1
East Lothian	11.9	7.8	3.0	1.2
East Renfrewshire	20.0	21.0	1.1	0.6
Edinburgh, City of	10.3	10.8	3.3	2.8
Eilean Siar	30.6	49.6	16.3	14.2
Falkirk	16.1	20.0	2.9	2.4
Fife	16.4	20.4	3.6	3.3
Glasgow City	5.8	5.3	2.3	0.0
Highland	53.2	61.5	8.7	8.0
Inverclyde	5.3	6.1	1.4	1.8
Midlothian	5.5	0.8	0.6	0.3
Moray	14.3	18.1	3.6	2.2
North Ayrshire	22.6	100.0	0.7	1.5
North Lanarkshire	46.3	68.2	2.5	5.3
Orkney Islands	79.6	96.4	0.0	26.7
Perth & Kinross	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Renfrewshire	4.1	5.2	2.2	1.1
Scottish Borders	58.5	56.1	5.5	2.8
Shetland Islands	48.3	44.5	16.5	12.9
South Ayrshire	30.4	54.3	1.5	1.1
South Lanarkshire	14.0	18.2	4.9	3.4
Stirling	40.5	53.0	7.9	7.9
West Dunbartonshire	5.7	4.5	1.7	2.8
West Lothian	3.4	3.1	1.3	0.3
All Scotland	25.3	29.3	4.0	2.9

Indicator 2: Primary school class size

The average number of children per primary school class.

The number of primary school classes of these types: single-year, composite, and classes containing P1 to P3 pupils.

The proportion of classes that meet national class size standards.

This indicator reflects the typical class size in which primary school pupils are taught. It shows the proportions of classes of different sizes and the extent to which each council uses composite classes – ie, classes where at least two year groups are taught in the same teaching area or class at the same time.

Points to bear in mind

Maximum class sizes for single-year and composite classes are subject to national agreement in Scotland. The maximum size is 33 pupils for single-year classes and 25 pupils for composite classes. The government is encouraging councils to reduce the class size for classes containing P1 to P3 pupils to no more than 30 pupils.

Schools use composite classes when there are few pupils or to adjust class sizes to meet the number of available teachers. Class sizes tend to be smaller in small schools. Therefore, councils with a higher proportion of small primary schools might also report smaller class sizes and a higher proportion of composite classes.

Changes in the number of children starting school each year will result in some variation between years in the total number of classes and the balance between composite and single-year classes.

COMMENTARY

Across Scotland in 2000/2001 there were just over 423,500 pupils and 17,300 primary school classes, a reduction of nearly 7,000 pupils and about 190 classes compared with the previous year. About 73% (12,632) of these were single-year classes and the rest were composite classes (Table 2a). These proportions are similar to those in previous years.

The average number of pupils per class ranged from 16 in Eilean Siar to 27.5 in East Renfrewshire, and all councils other than Eilean Siar and Shetland Islands had an average class size of over 20 pupils.

The extent to which councils had single-year or composite classes of above the nationally agreed class size was very low. Only five councils reported that any classes had more than 33 pupils. Twelve councils, four less than in 1999/2000, reported that a few composite classes had more than 25 pupils.

Overall, only 4.6% of classes with P1 to P3 pupils had more than 30 pupils, a reduction from 7.2% in 1999/2000. **Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway and the three Islands councils were the only councils to report that none of their classes with P1 to P3 pupils had 31 or more pupils. South Ayrshire and West Lothian reported that over 15% of the classes containing P1 to P3 pupils had more than 30 pupils** (Table 2b).

Table 2a: Primary school pupil and class numbers

COUNCIL	Number of pupils			Number of classes		
	Total	Average per class		Total	Single-year	Composite
	2000/2001	2000/2001	1999/2000	2000/2001		
Aberdeen City	14,799	25.1	25.6	590	509	81
Aberdeenshire	20,952	23.1	23.5	908	503	405
Angus	9,315	23.9	24.3	389	268	121
Argyll & Bute	7,636	20.9	21.3	366	171	195
Clackmannanshire	4,361	25.5	25.5	171	140	31
Dumfries & Galloway	12,513	23.3	23.4	536	270	266
Dundee City	11,421	25.8	25.3	443	383	60
East Ayrshire	10,813	24.8	25.2	436	350	86
East Dunbartonshire	10,394	26.1	26.7	398	333	65
East Lothian	8,078	26.0	25.9	311	242	69
East Renfrewshire	8,755	27.5	27.6	318	286	32
Edinburgh, City of	29,134	25.6	25.9	1,138	998	140
Eilean Siar	2,278	16.0	15.4	142	18	124
Falkirk	12,336	26.2	26.5	471	370	101
Fife	29,614	24.4	24.2	1,215	881	334
Glasgow City	44,866	24.5	24.9	1,830	1,475	355
Highland	18,705	21.5	21.6	872	414	458
Inverclyde	7,360	24.5	24.8	300	247	53
Midlothian	7,298	24.5	24.7	298	231	67
Moray	7,800	24.5	24.6	319	218	101
North Ayrshire	12,204	25.4	24.9	480	379	101
North Lanarkshire	28,920	24.8	24.8	1,167	886	281
Orkney Islands	1,783	20.5	19.5	87	51	36
Perth & Kinross	10,677	23.9	23.9	446	297	149
Renfrewshire	15,080	26.2	26.6	575	513	62
Scottish Borders	8,953	22.9	23.0	391	224	167
Shetland Islands	2,118	17.2	18.0	123	61	62
South Ayrshire	9,065	25.2	25.4	360	281	79
South Lanarkshire	26,145	25.5	25.0	1,026	716	310
Stirling	6,929	23.6	23.6	294	207	87
West Dunbartonshire	8,371	24.8	26.0	337	262	75
West Lothian	14,869	26.4	26.3	564	448	116
All Scotland	423,542	24.5	24.6	17,301	12,632	4,669

Table 2b: Classes with P1 to P3 pupils

COUNCIL	Number of classes	30 pupils or less (%)	
	2000/2001	2000/2001	1999/2000
Aberdeen City	262	95.0	94.5
Aberdeenshire	410	97.3	96.2
Angus	181	97.8	93.3
Argyll & Bute	180	100.0	98.9
Clackmannanshire	77	92.2	93.6
Dumfries & Galloway	260	100.0	98.1
Dundee City	193	95.9	97.1
East Ayrshire	192	96.4	92.7
East Dunbartonshire	175	95.4	85.6
East Lothian	144	95.1	93.8
East Renfrewshire	145	93.1	77.6
Edinburgh, City of	512	94.1	89.6
Eilean Siar	80	100.0	100.0
Falkirk	216	89.8	82.6
Fife	555	98.4	96.6
Glasgow City	804	93.7	88.0
Highland	416	98.8	99.1
Inverclyde	133	97.0	95.6
Midlothian	134	97.8	96.4
Moray	146	97.3	96.1
North Ayrshire	200	94.0	91.8
North Lanarkshire	524	97.5	97.2
Orkney Islands	44	100.0	100.0
Perth & Kinross	210	94.8	92.3
Renfrewshire	252	93.3	82.5
Scottish Borders	185	98.9	96.8
Shetland Islands	61	100.0	100.0
South Ayrshire	116	82.8	86.6
South Lanarkshire	464	94.4	96.7
Stirling	136	94.1	97.7
West Dunbartonshire	149	99.3	86.6
West Lothian	256	80.1	81.1
All Scotland	7,812	95.4	92.8

Indicator 3: Primary school occupancy

The total number of primary schools, and the percentage of schools where the ratio of pupils to places is less than 60%, 61% to 100% and 101% or more.

The occupancy level is a measure of how many school places have been taken up. For example, if a school has 150 places and pupils fill 120, the occupancy level is 80%.

Points to bear in mind

Councils have some discretion in the way that they measure occupancy levels, so there may be minor differences in approach among them. Some of the factors which may be important are:

- how non-teaching rooms are treated
- how rooms used for only part of the curriculum are treated
- whether surplus accommodation is given over to community or other use and is no longer treated as available for school use
- whether or not gymnasiums are counted as teaching rooms.

In 1995 the Accounts Commission published a report 'Room for learning' on the management of surplus capacity in schools. It highlighted the need for action to be taken to reduce surplus capacity, while recognising that the restructuring of education provision was a difficult task. The report is available from Audit Scotland or from our web site:

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COMMENTARY

The number of primary schools in Scotland continued to fall in 2000/2001 to 2,264, 16 fewer than in 1999/2000 and 44 fewer than in 1996/97. Of these, just under a third were reported as 60% occupied or less, a proportion similar to recent years

(Table 3a). East Lothian was the only council that reported having no schools less than 61% occupied, Four councils (Argyll & Bute, Eilean Siar, Glasgow and Shetland Islands) reported that at least half of their primary schools were less than 61% occupied. However, the problems of under-occupancy are also evident in Dundee, Inverclyde, Moray and South Ayrshire where under occupancy in at least 40% of schools was reported.

Table 3a: The overall number of primary schools and the proportion that were less than 61% occupied

	2000/2001	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998	1996/1997
Number of schools	2,264	2,280	2,282	2,294	2,308
Percentage with occupancy level of 0-60%	31.6	31.6	30.9	32.1	32.2

Overall, just over 7% of primary schools were reported as having some level of over-occupation (ie, 101% occupied or more)

(Table 3b). However, the extent to which schools were over-occupied varied widely, with both Aberdeenshire and East Renfrewshire reporting that more than one in five of their primary schools was over occupied while 12 councils reported that none of their primary schools was over-occupied.

Table 3b: The proportion of primary schools in each occupancy band

COUNCIL	Number of schools	Percentage occupancy		
		0-60%	61-100%	101% or more
Aberdeen City	57	24.6	63.2	12.3
Aberdeenshire	156	19.9	50.6	29.5
Angus	61	29.5	65.6	4.9
Argyll & Bute	82	53.6	46.3	0.0
Clackmannanshire	19	21.1	73.7	5.3
Dumfries & Galloway	114	33.3	66.7	0.0
Dundee City	41	41.5	48.8	9.8
East Ayrshire	46	39.1	60.9	0.0
East Dunbartonshire	36	11.1	88.9	0.0
East Lothian	35	0.0	97.2	2.9
East Renfrewshire	24	4.2	75.0	20.8
Edinburgh, City of	102	23.5	56.9	19.6
Eilean Siar	42	73.8	26.2	0.0
Falkirk	48	25.0	75.1	0.0
Fife	146	19.9	75.3	4.8
Glasgow City	203	57.2	39.9	3.0
Highland	189	39.2	58.7	2.1
Inverclyde	32	40.6	56.3	3.1
Midlothian	36	8.3	83.4	8.3
Moray	46	43.5	56.6	0.0
North Ayrshire	53	11.3	88.7	0.0
North Lanarkshire	130	25.3	66.9	7.7
Orkney Islands	21	28.6	71.4	0.0
Perth & Kinross	77	23.4	58.5	18.2
Renfrewshire	52	17.3	78.9	3.8
Scottish Borders	71	15.5	64.8	19.7
Shetland Islands	34	58.8	35.3	5.9
South Ayrshire	45	44.4	53.4	2.2
South Lanarkshire	124	39.5	60.5	0.0
Stirling	42	26.1	73.8	0.0
West Dunbartonshire	35	37.1	62.9	0.0
West Lothian	65	13.8	69.2	16.9
All Scotland	2,264	31.6	61.2	7.2

Indicator 4: Secondary school occupancy

The total number of secondary schools, and the percentage of schools where the ratio of pupils to places is less than 60%, 61% to 100% and 101% or more.

The occupancy level is a measure of how many school places have been taken up. For example, if a school has 1000 places and pupils fill 800, the occupancy level is 80%.

Points to bear in mind

Councils have some discretion in the way that they measure occupancy levels, so there may be minor differences in approach among them. Some of the factors which may be important are:

- whether or not gymnasiums are counted as teaching rooms
- how non-teaching rooms are treated
- how rooms used for only part of the curriculum are treated
- whether surplus accommodation is given over to community or other use and is no longer treated as available for school use.

In 1995 the Accounts Commission published a report 'Room for learning' on the management of surplus capacity in schools. It highlighted the need for action to be taken to reduce surplus capacity, while recognising that the restructuring of education provision was a difficult task. The report is available from Audit Scotland or from our web site:

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COMMENTARY

In 2000/2001, there were 388 secondary schools in Scotland, 14 fewer than in 1996/97. Of these, less than one in six (15.7%) were reported as 60% occupied or less (Table 4a), slightly fewer than last year (17.5%). Fourteen councils, three more than last year, reported having no schools that were less than 61% occupied. However, two councils (Eilean Siar, and Orkney Islands) again reported that at least half of their secondary schools were less than 61% occupied.

Table 4a: The overall number of secondary schools and the proportion that were less than 61% occupied

	2000/2001	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998	1996/1997
Number of schools	388	388	390	399	402
Percentage with occupancy level of 0-60%	15.7	17.5	16.9	21.1	21.1

Just over 15% of secondary schools were also reported as having some level of over-occupation (ie, 101% occupied or more) (Table 4b). However, the proportion of secondary schools in the different occupancy bands varied widely among councils.

Nineteen councils reported a number of schools having some level of over-occupation and 11 councils reported that at least 20% of their secondary schools have some level of over-occupation. Both Aberdeenshire and Perth & Kinross reported that at least 50% of their secondary schools were over-occupied.

More than half of Scotland's councils (17) had some level of both over-occupied primary and secondary schools.

Table 4b: The proportion of secondary schools in each occupancy band

COUNCIL	Number of schools	Percentage occupancy		
		0-60%	61-100%	101% or more
Aberdeen City	13	23.1	61.6	15.4
Aberdeenshire	16	0.0	43.8	56.3
Angus	8	12.5	87.5	0.0
Argyll & Bute	10	10.0	90.0	0.0
Clackmannanshire	3	0.0	66.7	33.3
Dumfries & Galloway	16	12.6	87.5	0.0
Dundee City	10	20.0	60.0	20.0
East Ayrshire	9	0.0	100.0	0.0
East Dunbartonshire	9	0.0	66.6	33.3
East Lothian	6	0.0	83.3	16.7
East Renfrewshire	7	0.0	57.2	42.9
Edinburgh, City of	23	8.7	65.2	26.1
Eilean Siar	13	61.6	38.5	0.0
Falkirk	8	25.0	75.0	0.0
Fife	19	10.5	89.5	0.0
Glasgow City	29	31.0	51.7	17.2
Highland	28	17.9	64.2	17.9
Inverclyde	8	37.5	25.0	37.5
Midlothian	6	0.0	66.6	33.3
Moray	8	0.0	87.5	12.5
North Ayrshire	10	0.0	100.0	0.0
North Lanarkshire	26	34.6	65.4	0.0
Orkney Islands	6	66.7	33.4	0.0
Perth & Kinross	10	0.0	50.0	50.0
Renfrewshire	14	21.4	50.0	28.6
Scottish Borders	9	0.0	55.5	44.4
Shetland Islands	9	22.2	66.6	11.1
South Ayrshire	9	22.2	66.6	11.1
South Lanarkshire	21	0.0	100.0	0.0
Stirling	7	0.0	100.0	0.0
West Dunbartonshire	7	14.3	85.7	0.0
West Lothian	11	0.0	90.9	9.1
All Scotland	388	15.7	69.1	15.2

Indicator 5: Special educational needs

The average time taken to complete an assessment of special educational needs, and the percentage of assessments:

- completed within 26 weeks
- taking longer than a year.

This indicator reports the average length of time that it takes each council to carry out an assessment of a child over the age of two, who may have special educational needs.

Points to bear in mind

It may be necessary to assess a pupil's special educational needs if the child has a learning difficulty, physical disability, psychological problem, or any combination of these. These needs cannot normally be met from the resources typically available in schools. Following an assessment, the council must notify the child's parent or guardian as to whether or not it intends to record the child as having special educational needs, and the reasons for its decision. The council must provide for the special educational needs of a child for whom it creates a record of need.

The key factors that influence this indicator are:

- the number and complexity of the referrals received by the council
- the time taken by the staff of other organisations to respond to requests for information.

In some cases, an assessment is delayed to allow for a change in a child's circumstances or personal development. In other cases, a longer time to complete an assessment is agreed with the parents or guardian of a child, or stems from a request from them for a delay.

COMMENTARY

In 2000/2001, councils carried out 2,073 assessments, of special educational needs (Table 5a), nearly 200 more than in 1999/2000 when two to five year old children were not included.

Councils again reported a reduction in the average time taken for an assessment, down to 28 weeks compared to 34 weeks two years earlier. The average time taken varied among councils from 11 weeks in Orkney Islands to 47 weeks in Shetland Islands, both of which reported having undertaken only small numbers of assessments. **Six councils (Angus, Clackmannanshire, Highland, Perth & Kinross, Orkney Islands and Stirling) had an average time for an assessment of less than 20 weeks.**

The average time to complete an assessment conceals wide variations among councils in the proportions of assessments completed within various time bands (Table 5b).

Councils completed an average of just over half of their assessments within six months (26 weeks), and Clackmannanshire, Orkney Islands and Stirling reported that they completed all assessments in six months or less.

Slightly less than 10% of assessments took at least a year to complete. Three councils Moray, Scottish Borders and Shetland Islands (where only six assessments were undertaken) reported that more than a quarter of their assessments took longer than a year to complete.

Table 5a: The average time taken to complete an assessment of special educational needs

COUNCIL	Number of assessments carried out	Average time taken to complete an assessment of special educational needs (weeks)		
	2000/2001	2000/2001	1999/2000	1999/1998
Aberdeen City	82	24	34	34
Aberdeenshire	93	30	39	40
Angus	34	18	16	18
Argyll & Bute	41	29	29	30
Clackmannanshire	18	17	17	19
Dumfries & Galloway	61	38	44	39
Dundee City	68	33	33	18
East Ayrshire	27	33	34	63
East Dunbartonshire	34	23	28	43
East Lothian	17	33	23	35
East Renfrewshire	27	26	26	46
Edinburgh, City of	177	20	20	24
Eilean Siar	8	26	25	40
Falkirk	115	32	32	31
Fife	101	23	26	29
Glasgow City	333	40	39	43
Highland	71	18	22	20
Inverclyde	51	29	34	32
Midlothian	12	27	34	49
Moray	51	44	35	34
North Ayrshire	15	27	32	41
North Lanarkshire	96	25	26	37
Orkney Islands	8	11	28	27
Perth & Kinross	54	18	17	18
Renfrewshire	123	26	27	27
Scottish Borders	34	46	49	42
Shetland Islands	6	47	37	57
South Ayrshire	44	24	23	23
South Lanarkshire	178	38	40	37
Stirling	21	15	16	13
West Dunbartonshire	27	23	21	25
West Lothian	46	35	47	62
All Scotland	2,073	28	30	34

Table 5b: The proportion of assessments completed in different time bands

	Proportion of assessments carried out			
	Up to 26 weeks (%)		More than a year (%)	
	2000/2001	1999/2000	2000/2001	1999/2000
Aberdeen City	63.4	45.8	9.8	18.6
Aberdeenshire	47.3	31.6	7.5	25.3
Angus	88.2	100.0	2.9	0.0
Argyll & Bute	53.7	45.5	2.4	3.0
Clackmannanshire	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Dumfries & Galloway	29.5	20.4	14.8	18.5
Dundee City	45.6	43.8	19.1	12.5
East Ayrshire	40.7	50.0	14.8	10.0
East Dunbartonshire	73.5	56.1	0.0	9.8
East Lothian	29.4	75.0	11.8	0.0
East Renfrewshire	51.9	52.2	0.0	4.3
Edinburgh, City of	74.6	74.8	6.2	2.5
Eilean Siar	50.0	46.2	0.0	0.0
Falkirk	41.7	41.2	8.7	6.9
Fife	78.2	58.0	4.0	2.3
Glasgow City	22.2	26.9	18.6	18.9
Highland	84.5	75.6	0.0	2.6
Inverclyde	52.9	29.7	3.9	10.9
Midlothian	41.7	26.7	0.0	6.7
Moray	17.6	42.9	27.5	17.1
North Ayrshire	53.3	50.0	0.0	8.3
North Lanarkshire	69.8	57.6	4.2	3.0
Orkney Islands	100.0	30.0	0.0	0.0
Perth & Kinross	81.5	93.6	0.0	0.0
Renfrewshire	52.8	50.4	0.0	0.9
Scottish Borders	20.6	5.1	26.5	38.5
Shetland Islands	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
South Ayrshire	65.9	65.5	2.3	0.0
South Lanarkshire	33.7	22.8	14.0	18.1
Stirling	100.0	93.8	0.0	0.0
West Dunbartonshire	63.0	72.2	0.0	5.6
West Lothian	43.5	20.5	21.7	33.3
All Scotland	50.8	46.1	9.6	11.0

Contacts

If you have any specific queries about the performance information, you may wish to contact your council. A contact person for each council is given below. If you have general queries about this pamphlet, you may wish to contact Alec Taylor or Jim Lakie at Audit Scotland (see back cover).

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