

Press Release Title

The Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2025/26 Annual Statistical Bulletin published.

Press Release text

The Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2025/26 Annual Statistical Bulletin, has been published today.

Planning statistics for the period April 2025 – March 2026 are now available. These data provide an overall view of planning activity. Alongside this there is a summary of council performance across the three statutory targets, for major development applications, local development applications and enforcement as laid out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, along with other statistics of interest such as application approval rates.

The publication is available on the [Department for Infrastructure website](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk).

KEY POINTS

The key points from the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2025/26 Annual Statistical Bulletin are:

- There were 9,642 planning applications received during 2025/26; this is a similar number to the previous year. This comprised of 9,473 local, 165 major and four regionally significant planning applications.
- In 2025/26, a total of 8,774 planning applications were decided, a decrease of five percent from the previous year. Decisions were issued on 8,658 local and 116 major applications during 2025/26.
- The average processing time for local applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2025/26 was 19.6 weeks across all councils. This exceeds the 15 week target and represents an increase of 0.6 weeks from the previous year. Three of the 11 councils met the 15 week target in 2025/26.

- The average processing time for major applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2025/26 was 41.4 weeks across all councils. This exceeds the 30 week target and represents an increase of 1.8 weeks from the previous year (39.6 weeks). Two of the 11 councils met the 30 week target in 2025/26.
- Across councils 75.1% of enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks during 2025/26, meeting the 70% target. This represents an increase of 4.4 percentage points from the rate recorded for 2024/25 (70.7%). Individually, seven of the 11 councils met the 70% target in 2025/26.

Notes for Editors

1. These statistics are accredited official statistics. Accredited Official Statistics are official statistics that have been independently reviewed by [Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#) and confirmed to comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.
2. This is the latest in a regular series of statistical bulletins related to Development Management (Planning) functions. The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 sets out the legislative framework for development management and provides that, from 1 April 2015, councils now largely have responsibility for this planning function. This statistical bulletin reports on activity and performance for 2025/26 (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026).
3. A new classification hierarchy for planning applications came into effect on 1 April 2014 in advance of the transfer of planning functions to local government from 1 April 2015. The development categories are – major and local development applications, processed primarily by councils, and regionally significant development applications, processed within the Department for Infrastructure. Note that the ‘major development’ category is based on a completely different definition to the previous ‘major’ category so figures relating to this category should not be compared with those from earlier bulletins (i.e. pre-2014/15).
4. The three statutory targets, for major development applications, local development applications and enforcement as laid out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 are reported on within this report. These are processing of local development decisions within an average of 15 weeks; processing of major development decisions within an average of 30 weeks and bringing 70% of enforcements to conclusion within 39 weeks.
5. The final records of all applications from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 were transferred in May 2026 from live databases and inspected for consistency in coding before figures were prepared for publication. Data for 2025/26 are now finalised and will not be subject to further scheduled revision.
6. Quarterly data are provided in more detail in the accompanying data tables together with comparable data from the previous financial year.
7. Following an independent assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, the NI Planning Statistics report received accreditation in December 2020, demonstrating that it meets the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

8. Electronic copies of the bulletin, associated data tables and summary infographic are available free of charge from the [Department for Infrastructure website](#).
9. For more information relating to this publication, including additional analysis, breakdowns of data, or alternative formats please contact:

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Website: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/dfi-statistics-and-research>.

10. All media queries should be directed to the Department for Infrastructure Press Office at: press.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk
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