

2017-18 SWF review statistics

The statistics below provide information about the reviews received from applicants in your area and compare these to the overall picture of reviews across Scotland. For comparison purposes, we have also included last year's figures.

We record cases as upheld where we change the council's decision. Uphold rates are therefore a useful indicator of how councils are performing as they illustrate how regularly we assess that a different decision should have been made. For councils with very low numbers of SPSO reviews, the uphold rates and comparisons are likely to be less representative. However, recording the uphold rates helps create a baseline for comparison in future years.

The average uphold rates in 2017-18 were (last year's figures in brackets):

- 35% (32%) for crisis grants
- 52% (43%) for community care grants.

The tables below summarise the total number of enquiries we handled, cases that we closed before decision and decision outcomes. Examples of the reasons for closing applications before making a decision include where applicants have contacted us before asking for a first tier review, before receiving their first tier decision (premature) or have chosen to withdraw their review request (Not duly made or withdrawn).

Authority	The Highland Council
Total Enquiries	21 (29)

Outcome	The Highland Council – cases closed pre-decision		
	Community Care	Crisis	Total
Advice only	1 (4)	1 (9)	2 (13)
Out of jurisdiction	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)
Premature	0 (7)	2 (3)	2 (10)
Total	1 (12)	3 (12)	4 (24)

Application Type	Total Decisions	Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate	National Average Uphold Rate
Crisis	11 (4)	8 (3)	3 (1)	27% (25%)	35% (32%)
Community Care	6 (1)	2 (0)	4 (1)	67% (100%)	52% (43%)
Total	17 (5)				

Suggestions for Improvement

Where we identify potential or actual failings, we record suggestions for improvements which we highlight directly to councils. We do this for all cases, whether or not we uphold them. For transparency, we include these in our decision letters to applicants.

We have outlined the findings we have recorded for your council broken down by the 'findings subject' and whether or not they were material to the decision. For clarity, findings which are material to the decision cause us to disagree with the overall decision, whereas non-material findings are general suggestions for improvement.

This information provides detail around the areas of your casework where we considered improvements could be made, and we anticipate this will be used for identifying areas of focus for learning. As a result of feedback from councils on our annual letter last year, we have amended the covering letter we send to councils with each decision to include more detailed information about our findings. Examples of our findings and further information regarding the findings categories are contained within our annual report. Councils have also been provided with detailed case by case feedback throughout the year.

We hope you find this helpful. If you would like to discuss this with them, or how we might provide learning support, please get in touch with the SWF team 0800 014 7299.

Authority	The Highland Council
Total findings	21 (4)

Subject	Findings: Material to Decision	
	%	Total
Guidance not followed	29% (0%)	2 (0)
Incorrect interpretation of information	14% (100%)	1 (1)
Insufficient information/ inquisitorial failure	14% (0%)	1 (0)
New information provided	43% (0%)	3 (0)
Total	100% (100%)	7 (1)

Subject	Findings: Not Material to Decision	
	%	Total
Communication issues – written	50% (33%)	7 (1)
Guidance not followed correctly	7% (33%)	1 (1)
Insufficient information/ inquisitorial failure	7% (0%)	1 (0)
Internal council recording issue	21% (0%)	3 (0)
Positive feedback	7% (0%)	1 (0)
Timescales	7% (0%)	1 (0)
Other	0% (33%)	0 (1)
Total	99%* (99%*)	14 (3)

**percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding*