

## Quarterly Performance Report – Housing Services

**Report Author** Head of Housing Services  
**Report Date** 5 February 2013  
**Report Period** Quarter 3: 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2012

### Introduction

The report is produced on a quarterly basis and provided to Executive members for review and assurance and will be available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of their Forward Work Programmes.

The report provides managerial assessment as an overview of the key messages within the report and then provides evidence and data to inform that assessment from the following sources:

- Performance Targets
- Monitoring of Key Actions from the Service Plan
- Improvement Plan Monitoring
- Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges
- Internal and External regulatory reports
- Customer satisfaction and feedback
- Awards and accreditations
- Resource Management (HR, ICT, Finance, Assets)

### Key Notes



The use of key note boxes is to highlight areas of interest or to respond specifically to enquiries from previous reports.

## Record of Amendments

<b>Date</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Amended by</b>
25/01/13	Draft report for review by Head of Service.	Simon Abbott
05/01/13	Revised draft for approval by Head of Service	Simon Abbott
20/03/13	Changes to foreword to show which improvement targets are meeting green.	Simon Abbott
24/02/2013	Changes requested by PPU to show differentiate indicators.	Simon Abbott

## Document Contents

The report contains the following sections:

### Foreword & Summary Sections

- 1 Foreword** This section contains an executive summary of key information for the Housing Service.
- This foreword will also highlight (where relevant) emerging risks that need to be considered as new SARCs and signpost readers to supporting commentary where necessary with in the detailed sections for the service areas.
- 2 Summaries** This section presents a summary progress for each of the following:
- Improvement Plan
  - Performance and Outcome Indicators
  - Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)
  - Service Plan

### Detail Sections

- 3-9 Service Area Information** A section for each area will be provided for service areas where the summary shows items off-track. Sections may also be included for those areas to report progress and risks on items not included in the summary.

### Appendices

- Appendix A Performance Graphs** Performance graphs for main indicators are shown in this appendix. Only performance graphs showing a red or amber status will be included in the detail sections where explanation of issues affecting performance can be detailed.
- Appendix B Supplementary Data** Supplementary data such as demand profiles will be contained in this section when required.

## 1 Foreword

Report highlights for this quarter are the following items:

<b>Performance</b>	It is pleasing to see many of the key performance indicators are green this quarter showing that they have achieved or exceeded the targets. Only three out of the thirteen indicators are showing as red this quarter and two of these have seen improvement since the last quarter.
<b>Supporting People</b>	This report welcomes the Supporting People team who following the restructure in Development & Resources have joined Housing Services in Community Support Services. You can find an introduction to the team later in this report.
<b>Rent Collection &amp; Arrears</b>	<p>Despite the continuing economic climate, it is pleasing to note that the income team has exceeded rental collection target of 95% (HLS/006a) this quarter with an outturn of 97.42% close to the end of year target of 97.5%.</p> <p>Current Tenant Arrears have improved between Q2 and Q3, and are lower than for the same quarter last year. However the target that was set for this quarter has not been met. The number of accounts with arrears under £1k has increased. It is therefore necessary to further develop the approach around early intervention and to act quickly before arrears build up.</p>
<b>Void Turnaround Times</b>	Void turnaround times although improved this quarter have still not met the 42 day target. Improvement in voids and allocations remains a priority for the service and is subject to continuous review.
<b>Income Lost Due Empty Properties</b>	A steady and sustainable quarter on quarter improvement on the percentage of income lost due to empty properties (HLS/013) has this month seen it achieve an all time low of 1.96% against a 2% target.
<b>Repairs</b>	It is extremely pleasing to see that for the first time, all responsive repairs targets have been exceeded. Of particular note is the average for non-urgent repairs which has almost halved this quarter from 43.63 days to 24.22 days against a target of 35 days.
<b>Empty Homes</b>	It is extremely pleasing to see that in the first three quarters of this year we have exceeded the target of bringing 3% of the county's empty homes back into use through direct action. To date 29 properties of 554

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suspected of being empty have been brought back into use. This equates to 5.23% of the total.

### **CBASS (Warden Service)**

The rollout of the new warden service is now complete with nine hubs open. The service is currently delivering services to general need tenants. The modernisation of the service has created the foundation for expanding coverage to a wider client base during 2013/14.

### **Homelessness**

During this quarter, the Housing Options Service provided specialist advice and support to 207 households who had approached the Council due to a risk of homelessness.

It is pleasing to report that due to effective preventative measures the service prevented 153 households from becoming homeless; however fifty-four households had to submit formal homeless applications. This represents a 58% increase in such applications, as compared to the same quarter in 2011. Evidence, perhaps of the negative impacts that the ongoing welfare reforms and the current economic climate are having upon members of our communities.

### **Welfare Reform & Rental Income**

Initiatives to mitigate the effects on residents of Flintshire have widened from the private sector (who bore the brunt of the first round of changes) to FCC tenants who will be affected with the next round of changes coming into effect. Housing officers and support staff visited over 1000 affected household to assist tenants in understanding and planning for the changes.

### **Financial Awareness Pilot**




A pilot scheme is in development which will see council tenants receiving a notice of possession for rent arrears, being invited to a Financial Awareness Workshop. The workshops will run in February and March and aim to communicate the importance of money management to tenants and signpost them to sources of help and advice to improve their ability to sustain their tenancies.













## 2 Summaries

### 2.1 Improvement Plan

The following summarises progress in the areas of the authority's improvement plan undertaken by Housing Services. Commentary will be provided for any areas showing a Red or Amber status in the detail sections.




#### RAG Status for Improvement Plans

RAG	Progress	Outcome
	<b>Limited Progress</b> - delay in scheduled activity; not on track	<b>Low</b> - lower level of confidence in the achievement of outcome(s)
	<b>Satisfactory Progress</b> - some delay in scheduled activity, but broadly on track	<b>Medium</b> - uncertain level of confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)
	<b>Good Progress</b> - activities completed on schedule, on track	<b>High</b> - full confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)






Council Priority	Target Date	Progress RAG	Outcome Confidence	Commentary
<b>7. To promote independent, healthy and fulfilled living in the community with the highest quality personalised and supportive social and health care services</b>				
7.6 Modernise the warden service	March 2012			Completed.
<b>8 To meet housing need in the County and to work with partners to ensure a sufficient supply of quality and affordable homes and housing services in the social, mixed tenure and private sector housing markets</b>				
8.1 Lead the Deeside Housing Renewal Area programme (also 5)	March 2021			
8.2 Further improve the Council's housing management and housing repairs service	On-going			
8.3 Increase the supply of affordable housing for first time buyers and people with special needs as a priority	March 2021			Toolkit in this area is working well but progress needs to be documented.
8.4 Extend the range of options in private sector housing	TBC			
8.5 Develop a regional housing register and common allocations policy	April 2013			Participation in the regional project is continuing.









## 2.2 Performance and Outcome Indicators

The status of the indicators are summarised for this quarter below:

RAG	Description	This Quarter
	Target missed	3
	Target missed but with in acceptable range	2
	Target achieved or exceeded	8

Graphs and commentary will be offered in the relevant detail section for only those indicators shown with a RAG status of either Amber or Red. Graphs for all indicators are included in Appendix A – Performance Graphs. An asterisk (\*) indicates that the indicator is an *improvement* target.




Community Support Services						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q2 Outturn	Q3 Target	Q3 Outturn	RAG	Change
<b>HHA/002</b> Timelessness of discharging homelessness duty	215 days	55.36 days	215 days	152.2 days		Downturn
<b>HHA/008</b> Homelessness presentations decided within 33 days.	90%	96.97%	90%	95.35%		Downturn
<b>HHA/016</b> Average number of days families with children spent in B&B	7 days	34 days	7 days	26.25 days		Improved see page 23
<b>HHA/017A</b> Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B	25 days	30.81 days	25 days	16 days		Improved
<b>HHA/017B</b> Average number of days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation	280 days	252.60 days	280 days	421 days		Downturn See page 24

<b>Housing Neighbourhood Management</b> (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Annual Target</b>	<b>Q2 Outturn</b>	<b>Q3 Target</b>	<b>Q3 Outturn</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>HLS/006aL*</b> Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation	97.50%	96.38%	95.00%	97.42%		Improved
<b>HLS/012aL</b> Current tenant rent arrears	3.00%	4.20%	3.5%	3.92%		Improved see page 17
<b>HLS/013L*</b> Percentage rent loss due to empty property	2.00%	2.08%	2.00%	1.96%		Improved
<b>HLS/014L*</b> Letting Times	42.00 days	50.29 days	42.00 days	46.25 days		Improved see page 19
<b>Housing Asset Management</b> (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Annual Target</b>	<b>Q2 Outturn</b>	<b>Q3 Target</b>	<b>Q3 Outturn</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>HLS/10aL</b> Emergency repairs	0.50 days	0.56 days	0.50 days	0.45 days		Improved
<b>HLS/10bL</b> Urgent Repairs	8.50 days	8.08 days	8.50 days	7.99 days		Improved
<b>HLS/10cL*</b> Non-urgent repairs	35.00 days	43.63 days	35.00 days	24.22 days		Improved
<b>HPMM8L</b> Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate	99.00%	98.80%	99.00%	99.72%		Maintained see page 21













### 2.3 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)

The table below summarises the position of SARCs at the end of the reporting period.

RAG	Description
	High Risk
	Medium Risk
	Low Risk

Commentary will be offered in the relevant detail section for only those SARCS that:

- Are showing a Red RAG status
- Where the RAG status has changed since the last reporting period
- Where the Green Predictive Date has changed since the last reporting period
- Where there has been considerable change or additions of secondary risks and activity

SARC	Previous Status	Current Status	Change	Green Predictive
<b>CD08</b> Connah's Quay, Shotton And Queensferry Housing Renewal Area			↔	March 2020
<b>CD12b</b> Housing Management			↔	TBC
<b>CD12c</b> Housing Repairs And Maintenance Services			↔	April 2013
<b>CD12e</b> Sheltered Housing			↔	November 2013
<b>CD38</b> Welfare Reform (This is a corporate risk. Whilst work is progressing against the SARC and the Welfare Reform Strategy the certainty of the risk and forecasted severity of its impact dictates that this will continue to be shown as red for foreseeable future.)			↔	TBC

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Please note that following that some of the SARC's have been omitted from the table above due to the change risks since their original draft. These are as follows:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>CL04</b><br>Affordable Housing | The overall risk in this area remains consistent however the issues around the SARC have considerably changed since its original draft. A refreshed SARC has been provided for consideration to both DMT and CMT and if approved will be introduced for the Q4 report.  |
| <b>CD12a</b><br>Housing Strategy  | The original overall risk for this area pre-dated the formation of the Housing Strategy Team which has now been firmly embedded. More pertinent risks now exist and will be subject to a new SARC. A new SARC has been provided for consideration to both DMT and CMT and if approved will be introduced for the Q4 report. |
| <b>CD12d</b><br>Homelessness      | This SARC needs to be reconsidered in light with the risks posed by the current economic climate and welfare reform. It is recommended that this SARC is now deleted as it is adequately catered for by CD38 – Welfare Reform.  |

## 2.4 Service Plan

Progress has been made in all areas of the service plan. The following table shows which areas have incurred slippage or have been subject to a revised timetable and references the page number of commentary where applicable:

Improvement Area	On Track	Commentary
<b>Service Wide</b>		
1a Staff Management	✓	
1b Customer Focussed Service	x	See page 20
<b>Neighbourhood Housing Management</b>		
2a Quality of Life in Neighbourhoods	x	See page 20
2b Maximisation of Rental Income	x	See page 20
2c Best use of Housing Stock	✓	
2d Regional Housing Register	✓	
2e Customer Involvement in Neighbourhood Management	✓	
<b>Housing Asset Maintenance</b>		
3a Implement Staff Restructure	✓	
3b Improve Reputation and Performance of Repairs Service	✓	
3c Develop Information on Our Housing Stock	✓	
3d Improve the Quality of Our Housing Stock	✓	
3e Customer Involvement in Housing Asset Management	✓	
<b>Community Support Services</b>		
4a Expanding Community Based Support Services	x	See page 27
4b Homelessness & Advice Services	✓	
4c Service Review	✓	
4d Customer Involvement in Community Support Services	✓	

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<b>Housing Renewal</b>		
5a Empty Homes	✓	
5b Private Sector Housing Strategy	x	See page 32
5c Develop the Capacity for Renewal Services	x	See page 32
5d Customer Involvement in Housing Renewal	✓	
<b>Housing Strategy</b>		
6a Local Housing Strategy	✓	
6b Affordable Housing	✓	
6c Performance Support	✓	
6d Business Systems	✓	
6e Customer Involvement in Housing Strategy	✓	

### 3 People & Customer Indicators

#### 3.1 Sickness & Absence

Overall absence for Housing Services has increased from 5.85% in Q2 to 7.22% giving an average 4.12 FTE (full time employee) days lost in comparison to 3.33 days in Q2. This is however an improvement on the same quarter last year of 8.60% which equated to 4.86 FTE days.

Human Resources are currently working on improving IT systems to provide a split between long term and short term sickness to inform future reports.

The following table gives a breakdown by service area comparing Q3 2012/13 to Q3 2011/12:

Service Area	Q3 2011/12		Q3 2012/13		Change
	%	Days	%	Days	
Community Support Services	6.41%	6.88	4.76%	2.71	Improved
Housing Management	5.85%	3.20	7.95%	4.53	Declined
Housing Asset Management	5.49%	5.02	8.80%	5.02	Declined
Housing Renewal	1.30%	0.69	1.86%	1.06	Declined
Housing Strategy	0.00%	0.00	1.46%	0.83	Declined

The analysis of each service area is as follows:

#### Community Support Services

Again this quarter the figures have continued to decrease and there has been a significant improvement from the same quarter last year. The management team have continued to have a strong focus on the Attendance at Work policy supporting employees on long term absence back to work, particularly within the Wardens Services.

#### Housing Asset Management

The figures have increased again this quarter despite management successfully supporting the return of one employee on long term sick. The figures are also higher compared to the same quarter last year. There have been a number of employees on long term sick in the last quarter where those employees have had hospital admissions and are now undertaking long recovery times following surgery. Analysis of sickness for this areas shows long term absence (over 28 days) is running at 5.77% for this area, leaving a short term absence rate of 3.03%.

Management have continued to conduct all aspects of the Attendance at Work policy and Stage 1 Capability Hearings and Attendance Reviews have been ongoing. The number of employees hitting the absence triggers has remained static.

The issue in this team continues to be long term absence and earlier intervention and a more robust approach is required to resolve the long term absence issues as effectively as possible at the earliest opportunity. A coaching session has been arranged with new managers in the service area to ensure they understand their responsibilities in managing attendance within their team.

## Housing Renewal

Is still within target.

## Housing Strategy

The figures have increased this quarter and compared to the same quarter last year, with employees hitting the absence triggers for the first time during December. (Simon what action are we taking?)

## Housing Management

This quarter has seen an increase in sickness and absence figures when compared to this quarter last year. These apply to both long term and short term absence; however there have been a number of employees returning from long term absence early in the New Year. There is also an increase in employees hitting the absence triggers compared to previous quarters. Attendance Reviews are being arranged within the department but to date no escalations to Stage 1 Capability meetings which will be addressed this quarter.

## Conclusion

Overall, there has been a further increase in absence figures this quarter; however the figures have decreased compared to the same quarter last year.

If this pattern continues within Housing Services, then the forecast is that the FTE Days lost will exceed 13 FTE Days by the end of the Quarter 4 (March 2013), which exceeds the Council's target of 9.8 FTE Days Lost.

Managers across the service are continuing to follow the Attendance at Work policy and are being more pro-active in dealing with long term absences.

## Training & Appraisals

### Training

For the first 9 months of 2012/13 Housing Services staff undertook 813.5 days of training (compared to 475 days for the same period 2011/12.)

The increase in time allocated to qualifications has increased, (254 days in comparison to 100 days for the same period in 2011/12.) This is due to the uptake of multi-skilling through the trade operatives.

There has been a focus on health and safety with asbestos training for Housing Asset Management and housing management law updates for the Neighbourhood Housing Teams.

The following qualifications are currently being undertaken:

- 1x FdSc Applied Computing
- 2 x BA (Hons) Advice Studied (Distance Learning)
- 8x NVQ Level 2 - Customer Service
- 1 x FdSc Housing Studies
- 1 x NVQ Level 3 - Management
- 1 x QCF Level 4 - Customer Service
- 2 x BSc (Hons) Housing Studies
- 2 x NVQ Level 3 - Business Administration
- 1 x FdSc Supported Housing
- 16x Multi-tasking Maintenance Technical Certificate Level 2

### Appraisals

The increased focus on appraisals for this quarter and shows a small improvement on the 73% reported in quarter 2 with many of the teams showing that 100% of staff due appraisals have received them.

The breakdown for each team is as follows:

Service Area	Complete	Due	Q2 %	Q3 %	
Senior Management Team	7	7	100%	100%	
NHM East	9	9	100%	100%	
NHM North	11	11	82%	100%	↑
NHM South	12	13	100%	92%	↓
Housing Asset Management	79	145	54%	54%	
Income Team	7	7	100%	100%	
Community Support Services	19	19	100%	100%	
CBASS (Warden Service)	44	44	100%	100%	

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Supporting People	7	9	n/a	78%	
Housing Renewal	13	16	81%	81%	
Housing Strategy	2	2	67%	100%	↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	↓

Housing Asset Management have rescheduled their appraisal programme in line with their restructure to help support staff into their new posts and ensure their training needs and objectives are aligned with the requirements of their new job descriptions. The first round of appraisals in this area will be seen in March 2013.

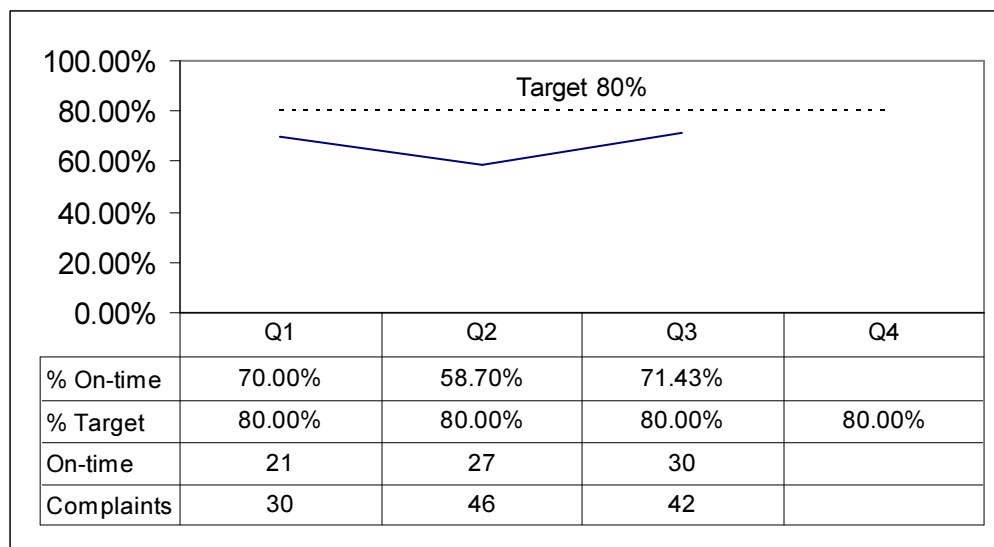
### 3.2 Customer involvement

Customer involvement in shaping our services remains a priority. All teams across the service now have their own customer involvement plan .

October saw our Autumn Tenants Conference which unlike previous conferences was split across two sessions, one in the afternoon and one in the evening to encourage a wider range of our tenants to attend. A further conference was also scheduled for January. As usual the conferences took the opportunity to update tenants on progress on promises and gain feedback on their priorities for service improvements.

Housing Renewal is currently preparing evidence for their pre-assessment for the Customer Service Excellence Award scheduled for early February. The work so far has produced some excellent examples of how the service is engaging with clients in this service area.

### 3.3 Complaints





Q3 has seen an improvement in response times but is still below target. The Head of Service is continuing to raise this as a priority area for improvement.



## 4 Neighbourhood Management

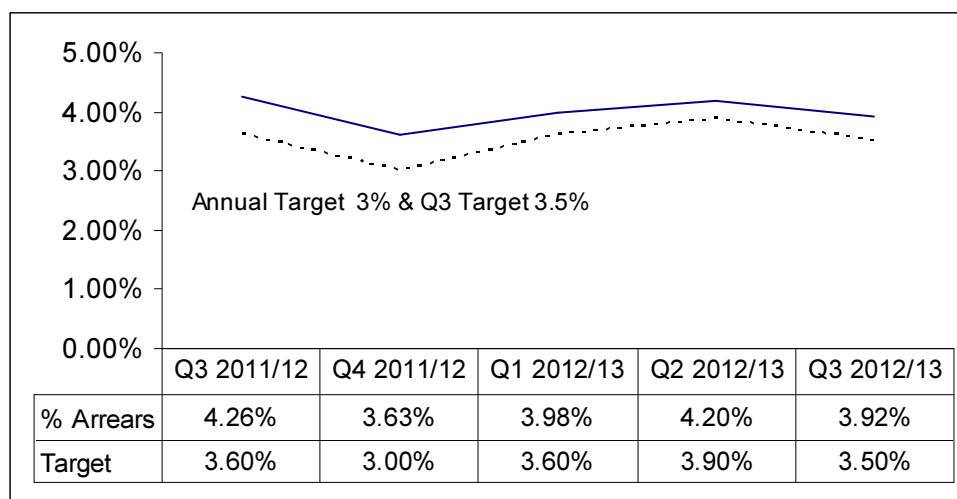
### 4.1 Performance Commentary

The targets (with the exception of HLS/006a) were not met for the following indicators for Neighbourhood Management:

-  **HLS/012a**  
Current tenant rent arrears
-  **HLS/014**  
Letting Times

Supporting information for these indicators is provided below:

#### HLS/012aL Current tenant rent arrears



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

It is disappointing to see that whilst current rent arrears have seen a considerable improvement from last quarter (reducing from 4.20% to 3.92%) we have not achieved the challenging target this quarter. However when compared to the comparable quarter last year (2011/12 Q3 4.26%) we can see a significant improvement. This shows that the new income team and processes, despite the current economic climate, is having a positive effect on this cyclic indicator.

The banded table below shows the Week 40 position.

Arrears band £'s	Accounts in Arrears Q2 (Wk40) 11/12	Accounts in Arrears Q2 (Wk40) 12/13	Total Outstanding Q2 (Wk40) 11/12	Total Outstanding Q2 (Wk40) 12/13
0-300	2983	2,966	£235,156.97	£247,081.72
300-600	415	469	£178,813.05	£204,089.30
600-1000	251	276	£194,598.79	£213,455.66
1000-2000	239	221	£332,583.10	£305,277.97

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2000-3000	75	77	£185,657.83	£188,376.05
3000-4000	23	14	£78,360.40	£45,957.82
4000-5000	8	8	£34,773.26	£36,037.65
5000-6000	3	2	£16,040.19	£10,424.31
6000-7000	2		£12,571.58	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3999</b>	<b>4033</b>	<b>£1,268,555</b>	<b>£1,250,700</b>

The overall banding table shows that:

- The number of accounts under £1,000 has increased from 3649 to 3711 (62 accounts)
- The number of accounts over £1,000 has reduced from 350 to 322 (reduction of 28 accounts)
- Overall rent arrears has reduced by £17,854

The Income Team are continuing to concentrate on two particular areas during 2012/13:

- Continuing work in tackling low level rent arrears cases;
- Reducing the number of arrears cases owing over £1k.

Current initiatives and work in this area to improve performance include:

**Debt collection of former tenant arrears**

Following the lean review on former tenant arrears the Income Team are taking forward recommendation to use a debt collection agency to pursue arrears owed by former tenants.

**Mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform on rental collection**

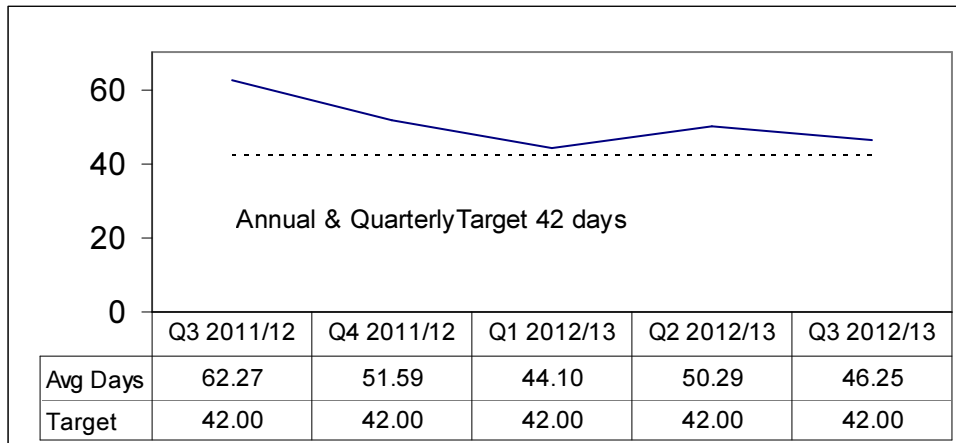
A service wide group was established in November to plan a co-ordinated approach to mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform on both our tenants and their ability to pay their rent.

Approximately one thousand tenants (those who are receiving housing benefit) were visited to discuss and identify the potential effect of Welfare Reform on their household and to discuss options to mitigating those effects. During this exercise data was collected to inform us of the potential impact on our tenant base. This data is currently being analysed and will be used to inform further initiatives for the Housing Service to assist affected tenants.

**Financial awareness pilot project for arrears cases**

A pilot project will also take place in February and March which requests tenants receiving a notice for rent arrears to attend a "Financial Awareness Workshop." The workshop is aimed at helping tenants sustain their tenancies and reduce their arrears through better money management and will provide an overview of support services available, household budgeting and other information. The outcomes of the pilot will be analysed and reported to ascertain if the workshops should be extended beyond the pilot period.

HLS/014L Letting Times



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

It is pleasing to see that this indicator has improved from the Q2 and shows a significant improvement from Q3 of last year. The table below shows the average number of days (rounded) for each stage of the letting process:

Period	Average Waiting Days	Average Work Days	Average Letting Days
Q4 2010/11	24	32	22
Q1 2011/12	30	30	15
Q2 2011/12	37	31	16
Q3 2011/12	25	26	11
Q4 2011/12	18	22	11
Q1 2012/13	15	21	7
Q2 2012/13	14	21	10
<b>Q3 2012/13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Waiting Days</b>	Average time from repairs receiving the keys to starting works		
<b>Work Days</b>	Average time between the start and completion of works		
<b>Letting Days</b>	Average time between the completion of works and the start of the new tenancy		

Whilst we have seen a 3 day improvement in the waiting time and 1 day in letting time this quarter it is disappointing to see that there has been increase in the work days. All three stages remain a priority for improvement and are under continuous review.



This processes and IT systems for this area will be formally assessed with a new lean review to take into account the new staff structure and the formation of a new in-house team to deliver Disabled Facility Grants, along with requirements to facilitate benchmarking with other authorities and RSL's.

## 4.2 Service Plan Updates

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Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area with the exception of the following:

### **Develop methods of gaining tenant feedback**

The service is looking to undertake the HouseMark STAR survey (Survey of Tenants and Residents). This item has now been deferred to the Service Plan for 2013/14.

### **Expand the tenant participation team to three officers as per the commitment in the Choices Document.**

The Choices Document commits the Council to increasing the number of officers responsible for tenant participation (from 1 to 3). Job descriptions have been designed for the following:

- Customer Involvement Assistant (engagement of young people)
- Customer Liaison Officer (capital programme)

The recruitment of is taking longer than anticipated due to the high demands on the Job Evaluation Panel. It is anticipated that the new posts will be filled by June 2013.

### **Implement recommendations from the allocations review**

Some of the recommendations from the allocations review have been put on hold pending a review on voids works.

### **Improve ASB service by implementing new procedures and IT system.**

A new system is under procurement and ASB procedures are currently under review by the new Neighbourhood Manager responsible for this area of the service.

## 4.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

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No reports for this section.

## 5 Housing Asset Maintenance

### 5.1 Performance Commentary

It is pleasing to see that for first time performance in all the responsive repairs indicators are green.



**HLS/10a**  
 Emergency repairs



**HLS/10b**  
 Non-urgent repairs

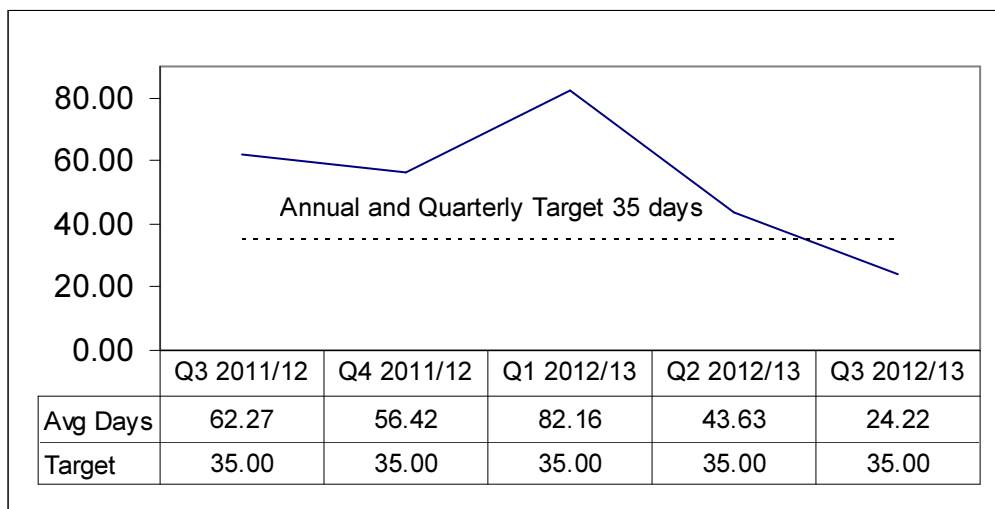


**HLS/10c**  
 Non-urgent repairs



**HPMM8**  
 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate

#### HLS/10cL Non-urgent repairs



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

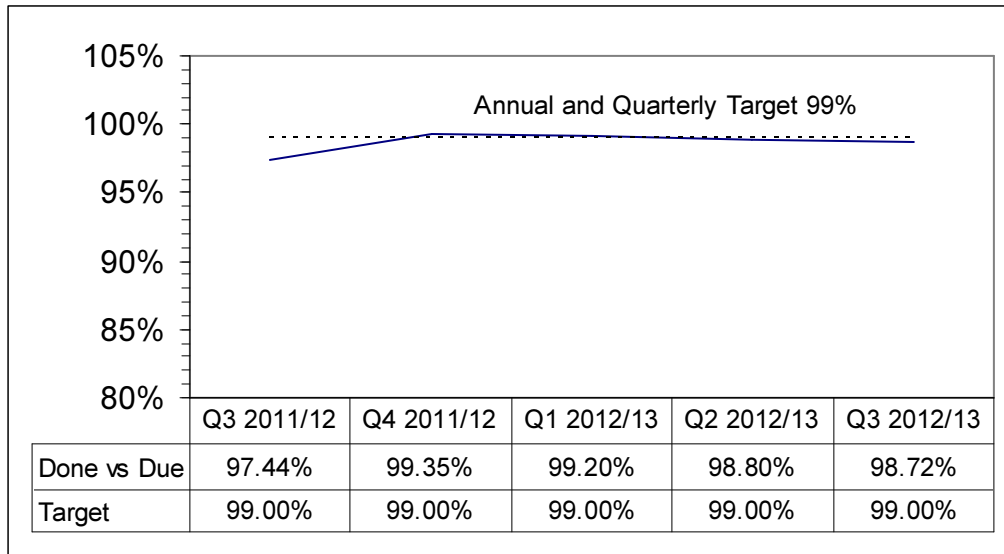
There is a significant improvement in the performance on non-urgent repairs (24.22 days against a 35 day target).

This is the first time that this category has achieved the target and is a huge success. The reason for this include operational improvements; ensured correct classification of the repairs; and continuing to increase the number of repairs being carried out by appointment.

However, there are still a small number of jobs that are out-of-target but as we are completing the majority of repairs within target - and many in just a few days, the average is significantly improved. There are many factors that will influence the average and the team would like to make members aware that this average may fluctuate. The Christmas period and the recent adverse weather may impact on performance in all categories in Q4 as the workforce will have been redeployed from completing non-urgent repairs to carry out essential emergency and urgent work.

**APPENDIX 1**

**HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

The target has been narrowly missed for this indicator however all properties due a service were visited on-time and/or are subject to our no-access procedures. Improvement in this area remains a priority for both Housing Asset Management and Neighbourhood Management.

**5.2 Service Plan Updates**

The revised service plans for this area are on-track.

**5.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports**

No reports for this section.

## 6 Community Support Services

### 6.1 Performance Commentary

It is pleasing to see despite both the increased demand for accommodation and the decreased availability of suitable and affordable accommodation in the private rented sector that the service is managing to maintain a Green RAG status on the majority of our indicators.



#### HHA/016

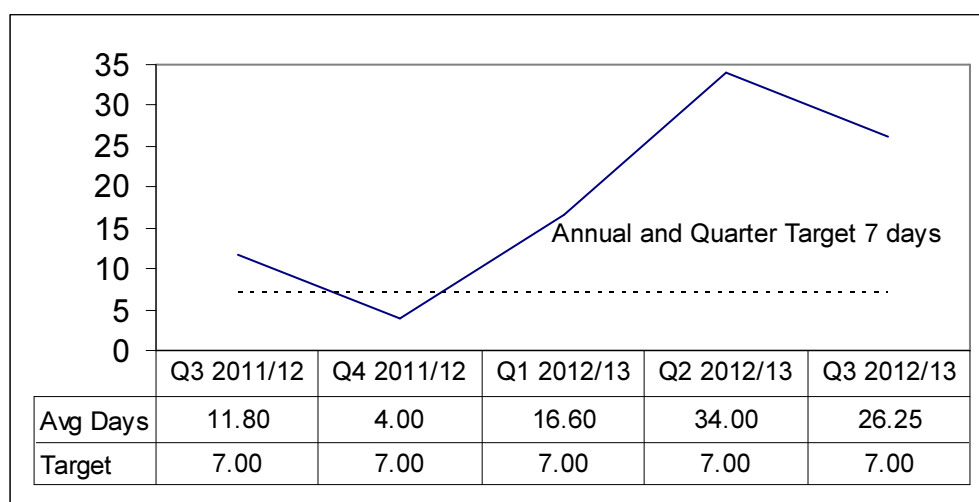
Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



#### HHA/017b

Average days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation

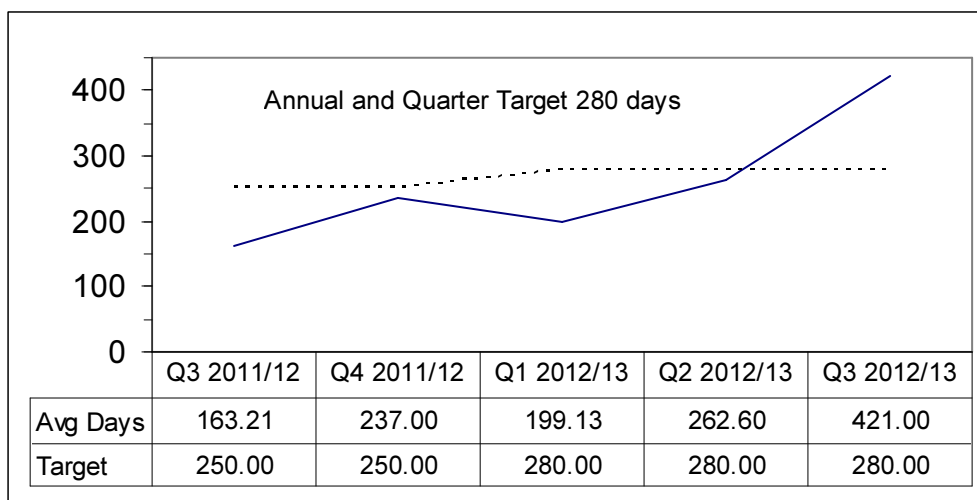
#### HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

During this quarter 8 households containing children were accommodated in B&B accommodation. Six of these households were accommodated prior to being moved-on into more suitable temporary homeless accommodation. The other 2 households were accommodated whilst they were provided with appropriate advice and support to secure their own accommodation (one household was determined to be intentionally homeless and the other found not to be homeless).

**HHA017b Average days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

The team were able to successfully move on 6 households this quarter. However 3 of these households had been accommodated in temporary accommodation for an average of 2 years. This was due to several factors including a household who needed intensive support to become able to live independently and households who had rent arrears which resulted in them having penalty points on the FCC housing register.

**6.2 Service Plans**

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area without exception.

**Internal and External Regulatory Reports**

No reports for this section.



## 7 Income Maximisation Unit

### 7.1 General Update

#### Successes

- The social security benefits and tax credits income generated for residents by successful welfare rights interventions totalled £759,000. This figure comprises of £647,000 on-going annual payments and £112,000 one-off lump sum payments. In the nine months of this current financial year the welfare rights team have generated over £1.9 million in benefit payments for residents
- 272 Flintshire residents received specialist advice and assistance from a welfare rights worker on a total of 424 welfare benefit and/or tax credit problems. Of these residents, 67 received specialist advice in connection with appealing an adverse decision on their benefit entitlement before a First-Tier Tribunal. Of concern though, 18 residents, who have recently contacted the service for assistance with challenging a decision, have not been allocated a caseworker. (see challenges below)
- Customer feedback received from residents who have been assisted by the caseworker service shows that 90% view the service as excellent and 97% said they would recommend the Welfare Rights Unit to someone else if they needed advice and assistance with welfare benefit problems.

#### Challenges

- *Resources* - the caseworker service is struggling to meet the demand from residents who need specialist advice and representation to challenge an adverse DWP decision on their benefit entitlement. Unfortunately, due to the combination of the sickness and disability benefit reforms and the reduction in benefit advisors in the Third Sector, due to the impact of the Legal Aid Bill 2012, this resource pressure will continue to intensify and residents needing specialist advice and representation may not be able to access the service.

#### Future

- *Undertake a lean review of the Advice and Homelessness service* – ensuring the effective and efficient use of the caseworker service resources and developing a casework management database that supports and enhances the delivery of the caseworker service.

#### Service Plan Updates

All service plan actions in this area are on-track without exception.

## 8 Welfare Reform Mitigation Project

Work continues on a number of work streams to help mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform. Key activity during Q2 is listed below:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Project Management Arrangements</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarification of the success factors for all work streams has been achieved and documented</li><li>• Formal project planning for each work stream has been carried out along with supporting project documentation</li><li>• Risk and issue logs have been established</li><li>• Formal reporting to the various boards and stakeholder groups has been established</li></ul> |
| <b>Establish Welfare Reform Response Team</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FCC provided funding for two additional posts.</li><li>• Recruitment interviews held – first of two appointments made</li><li>• Funding application for £100K to increase the team resources submitted to the Welsh Government</li></ul>  |
| <b>Supporting Under-Occupying FCC Social Housing Tenants</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 78% of affected tenants discussed their options with a Housing Officer and identified how they may address problems when their Housing Benefit is reduced.</li><li>• Financial Awareness workshop pilot planned to support tenants in rent arrears and help them to develop the skills needed to manage their household budget.</li></ul>                                     |
| <b>Development Programme for Front Line Staff</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training programme for FCC front line staff developed and all training materials produced, first courses to be delivered in February 2013</li></ul>   |
| <b>Supporting Adult Social Care Service Users Receiving a Sickness/Disability Benefit</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional project being developed to provide Adult Social Care Service Users with advice and support through the migration of their sickness and/or disability claims and protect the Adult Social Care charging policy income stream.</li></ul>   |

## 9 Community Based Accommodation Support (Wardens)

### 9.1 General Update

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Nine hubs are now open. The service is currently delivering services to a small number of general need tenants. The modernisation of the service has created the foundation for expanding coverage to a wider client base during 2013/14.

### 9.2 Service Plans

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All service plans actions are on track with the exceptions of the procurement of a suitable ICT system to provide monitoring and reporting of outcomes for this service area. The delay in this area is due to the bespoke requirements for the service meaning that an in-house solution would need to be developed.

## 10 Supporting People

Following the restructure of Development & Resources the Supporting People Team has been transferred into Housing Services. The following is an introduction to Supporting People.

### What is the Supporting People Programme?

Supporting People is the Government's long-term policy to enable local authorities to plan, commission and provide housing-related support services, such as homeless hostels, women's refuges and sheltered housing, with a view to helping vulnerable people live independently.

The programme began in 2003 and brought together funding streams from a wide variety of sources including health, probation, housing benefit and social services into one central pot. The programme aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing-related support services which are cost effective and reliable, and which complement existing care services. In Flintshire, the Supporting People programme funds just over £7million of services.

The purpose of this support is to prevent the problems that can cause vulnerable people to become homeless: build up debts or rent arrears, need hospital treatment or move into care, and to help them to have a better quality of life and be independent in their community.

The programme is much more than a County Council activity – it is a working partnership, made up of representatives from the Local Health Board, North Wales Probation, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, Directorate of Community Services and the support agencies who provide housing-related support for vulnerable people.

### Who is the programme for? What support can it deliver?

The programme aims to help a wide range of vulnerable adults, many of whom are not traditional users of statutory services. They include:

- Homeless people who need support or people who are at risk of losing their home
- People with physical, sensory or learning disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- People who misuse drugs or alcohol
- Young people at risk or who are leaving care
- Ex-offenders, people leaving prison or people at risk of offending
- Refugees who have been given leave to stay in the country
- Women or men fleeing domestic abuse
- Teenage parents
- People living with Chronic Illnesses
- Older People with Support needs

Housing related support can help people with many housing related matters, including:

- Managing debts, budgeting and applying for benefits
- Getting on with neighbours
- Setting up home and resettlement support

- Understanding tenancy agreements
- Dealing with other agencies, such as health and advice services
- Staying safe at home
- Life and social skills
- Taking up daytime activities, training and employment in a community

### **What difference does the programme make?**

The Supporting People programme aims to help to reduce homelessness, offending and re-offending, anti-social behaviour and admission to hospital or care homes. It can also help people to be more in control of their lives, their finances and their future.

Each year, the Supporting People team monitor the amount of support that has been provided to vulnerable people within the county and requires providers to submit information to explain how successful the project has been in terms of securing stable accommodation for individuals and families.

We monitor outcome measurements for all projects to provide information about the difference that the programme makes. The measurements that we will require our providers to monitor against are:

- a. Feeling Safe
- b. Safety and wellbeing of themselves and others
- c. Managing Accommodation
- d. Managing relationships
- e. Feeling part of the community
- f. Managing money
- g. Education & Learning
- h. Employment/ volunteering
- i. Physically healthy
- j. Mentally healthy
- k. Healthy lifestyle

## 11 Housing Renewal

### 11.1 General Update

The Housing Renewal area continues to build on the good work delivered during the last Quarter.

#### Countywide Home Repair and Renovations

The Service continues to deliver home repair and renovation support across the County. During this quarter 15 people came forward requiring assistance. This is a fall of 13 from the previous quarter. This is attributable to the fact that the 2012/13 budget has been committed and people were being advised that there may be a wait for assistance. Three property surveys were undertaken; a fall from 14 in the previous quarter and scheduled work will now be taken forward for loan support. This fall is due to DFG's being prioritised, as no further new loans can be made until April 2013. A total of 18 loans were completed during this quarter, with a work value of £102,544. The loans continue to provide vital support to those homeowners who cannot fund the cost of repairs and improvements to their homes. It also supports small local contractors.

#### Delivery of Disabled Adaptations

Performance in this area continues to improve, with the average number of days from referral to Housing Renewal to completion on site being 96 days, an improvement of 2 days on the last quarter. This improvement in performance is to be welcomed and will begin to evidence within the national strategic indicator over time. However, with increased throughput comes increased cost. The Service has had to control cost carefully and ensure that sufficient budget is allocated to meet demand. In the Q2 performance report it was indicated that there is likely to be a budget shortfall of £128,000 on DFG's. I am pleased to report that this has been managed through efficiencies elsewhere in the housing renewal programme and through a £40,000 investment that has been made available to Flintshire Care & Repair by Welsh Government for disabled adaptations.

#### Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area

A tendering exercise has been undertaken for a new contractor to deliver Phase 2 of the Group repair scheme and to date 120 of the 180 eligible properties have been surveyed. The Service is still not in a position to appoint a contractor at this stage and is in discussion with the Council's procurement service for the most expeditious way to move to appointment and start on site.

The partnership with Groundwork (an environmental works social enterprise) around the delivery of small scale environmental improvements has continued successfully during 2012/13. The types of work currently being undertaken include planting schemes, rubbish clearing, restoration of benches and planters and the painting of railings. In order to manage the remaining budget the programme has been scaled back, to include more volunteers and from October 2012, the Service was reduced to 3 days per week from the previous 5 days. Volunteer hours are currently averaging at over 100 per month, thanks predominantly to the support from local schools.

## Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP)

The energy efficiency measures being installed as part of Phase 3 of the CESP programme comprising Connah's Quay and Greenfield continued in this Quarter. All CESP work was completed by the end of Quarter 3, as required by Central government. The Service is pleased that at the completion of the programme for every £1 of Council money spent on this programme, £5 has been levered in from other sources. The Service is therefore seeking to sustain investment in this area, despite the likely cut to the 2013/14 budget.

## Additional Energy Efficiency Work

The Green Deal is the Coalition Government's flagship energy efficiency programme, aiming to provide finance in the form of Green Deal loans for energy efficiency measures.

As stated in the Quarter 2 Report, Welsh Government has funded consultancy support to examine the various options open to local authorities in a regional context in regard to the Green Deal. Marksman Consulting have been working on a joint business case with Flintshire and Wrexham during the quarter under the provider model. The provider model is one in which Council's would invest some of their own capital in the provision of recyclable Green Deal Loans to householders.

The business case is now complete and shows that for the programme to be self financing it would need to complete measures in 8,000 homes over a 3 year programme across the 6 North Wales counties. Whilst this number may appear high, it is only 5% of the entire accessible market, which are those homes still requiring energy efficiency measures. Further discussions with Members, Officers and other LA's will take place in Quarter 4 to determine whether there is sufficient interest to take this forward.

## Empty Homes

Activity in this area continues to enjoy a high profile by Welsh Government and a national target of 5000 homes returned to occupation during this term of government has been set. To assist in this endeavour, a £10M national revolving loans fund has been established and is being managed through 6 Regional Groups.

As Members will be aware from the previous quarterly report, Flintshire Housing Renewal was asked to lead the North Wales Region and to date has claimed for the Region £1,570,597 out of a total of £2,332,532. Flintshire's current claimed share of this resource is £526,000, which is the highest claim across the region to date. This will provide loans for 22 units of accommodation across the County. Again, detailed information has proved vital in securing these resources.

The resources can only be claimed once a valid application is in place and the North Wales Region has been the most successful in making claims. Welsh Government have stated that on this basis it is likely they will be able to release further resources to the Region before the end of the financial year from an under spending region. Flintshire alone now has an application waiting list totalling £360K, so any further resources would be welcomed.

During this Quarter the new 3 stage letters have been prepared and sent out. These letters are an attempt to further engage with the owners of empty properties, offering

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## **APPENDIX 1**

encouragement and support in the initial letter, through to the threat of enforcement action in the third letter. This will offer an opportunity, not only to further improve data on empty homes, but should act to find a solution for an increasing number. Through this data cleanse and subsequent discussion with property owners, 406 properties are long term vacant as opposed to the 1100 previously recorded.

The target of 3% of 554 properties suspected as being empty on 1 April 2012 gave us a target of 17 homes to be brought back into use through direct action. It is extremely pleasing to see that in the first three quarters of this year we have exceeded that target with a count to date of 29 properties, this equates to 5.23%. On this basis a more challenging target will be set for returning empty homes in to use during the 2013/14 financial year.

### **Customer Service Excellence**

The Housing Service is seeking to provide excellent service to all its customers. As part of this commitment the Housing Renewal Service is currently preparing to seek accreditation for the Customer Service Excellence Award. This Government standard will be externally assessed and will give a particular focus to delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. Work is ongoing to compile evidence against the standard and it is hoped that the Service will be in a position to undergo the pre-assessment in Quarter 4. It is then envisaged that the Customer Service Excellence approach will be rolled out across the Housing Service.

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## **11.2 Service Plan Updates**

All areas of the service plan are on track with the exception of the following:

### **5b) Private Sector Housing Strategy**

This item has been rescheduled for Q1 of 2012/13, as it is to be informed by the WLGA Private Rented Sector Improvement Project

### **5c) Develop the capacity for Renewal Services**

This area is subject to the JEQ process and has been rescheduled to Q1 of 2013/14.

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## **11.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports**

No reports for this section.



## 12 Housing Strategy

### 12.1 General Update

The following are brief updates on the Housing Strategy Team's main functions:

#### Local Housing Strategy

The new Flintshire Local Housing Strategy was endorsed by the Scrutiny committee in October 2012. Once formally adopted by the Council, this will inform the development of a range of supporting strategies forming the core of the Housing Strategy Team's activities during 2013-2014.

#### Gypsy-Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

The findings of the North Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment were endorsed by the Scrutiny committee in December 2012. This assessment will inform the development of a Flintshire Gypsy & Traveller strategy. The accommodation assessment indicates growth for additional pitches and as part of the strategy development process we will clarify with the Welsh Government its expectations over a regional approach with all authorities meeting localised need as identified.

#### Affordable Housing

The first draft of the Affordable Housing Strategy has been prepared. This strategy will include measures to inform robust monitoring of both housing delivery and marketing activity to promote the council's initiatives. Delivery of additional affordable homes continues to be a challenge in the current economic and financial climate with developer confidence remaining low.

#### Customer Involvement

Engagement with elected members continued with a members' briefing seminar on working with Registered Social Landlords. The programme of future sessions will be confirmed shortly and added to the member's calendar.

### 12.2 Service Plan Updates

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area without exception.

### 12.3 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)

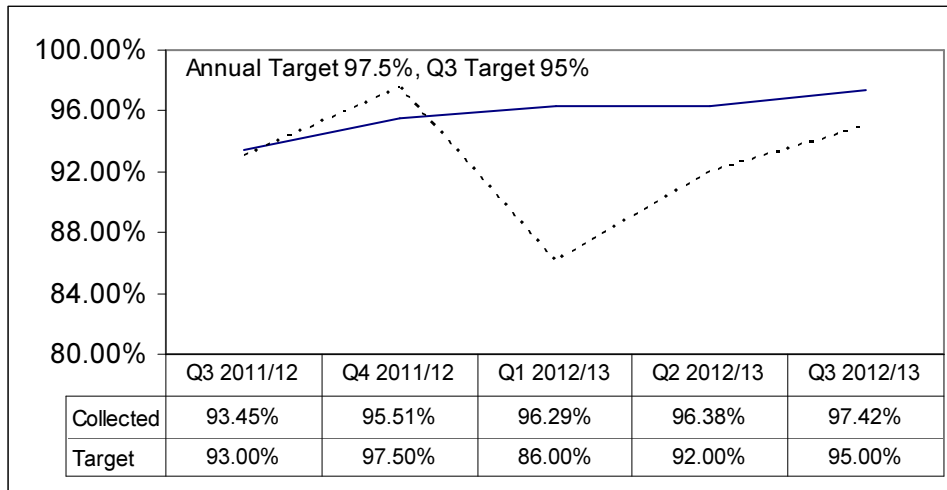
Housing Strategy has taken the opportunity to refresh the SARCs on Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing as part of an exercise to transform the SARCS to a new format recommended by Internal Audit. The SARCs for this area are currently awaiting approval by DMT and CMT.

### 12.4 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

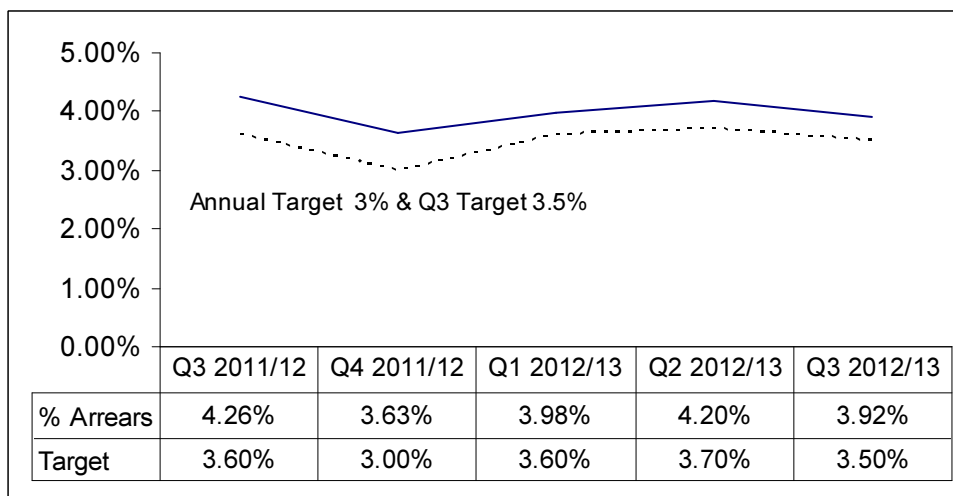
## Appendix A – Performance Graphs

### HLS/006aL Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



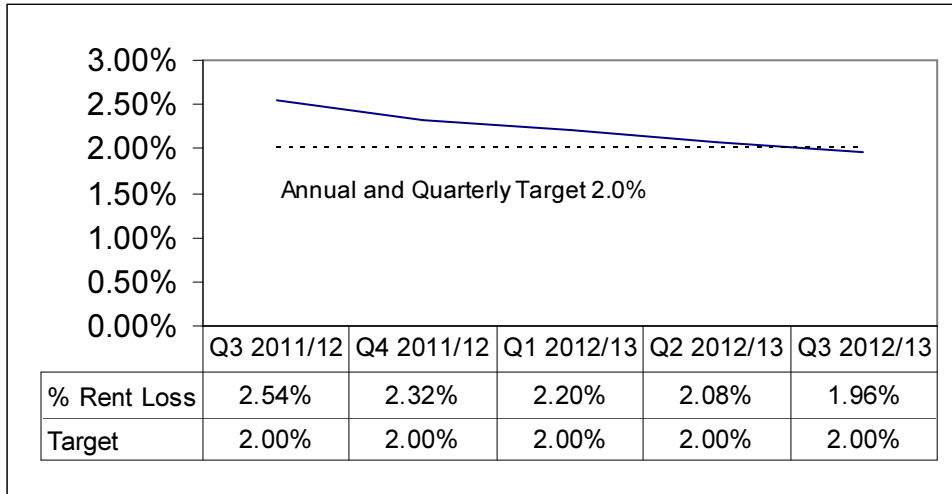
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

### HLS/012aL Current tenant rent arrears



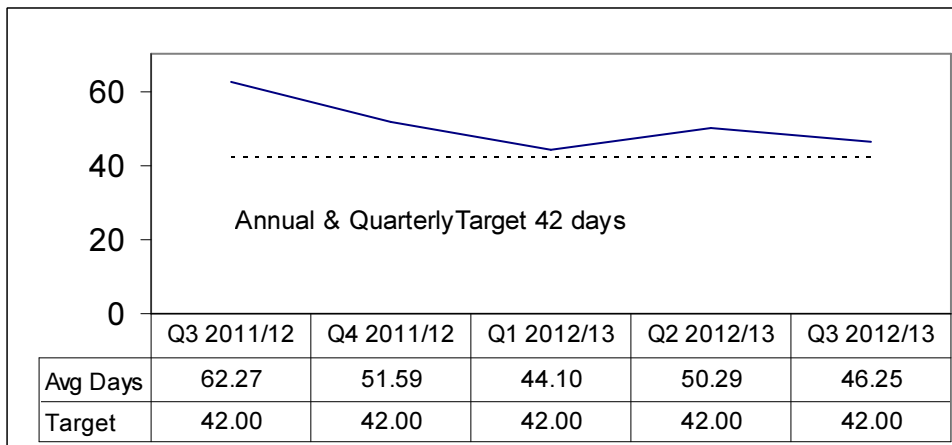
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

**HLS/013L Percentage rent loss due to empty property**



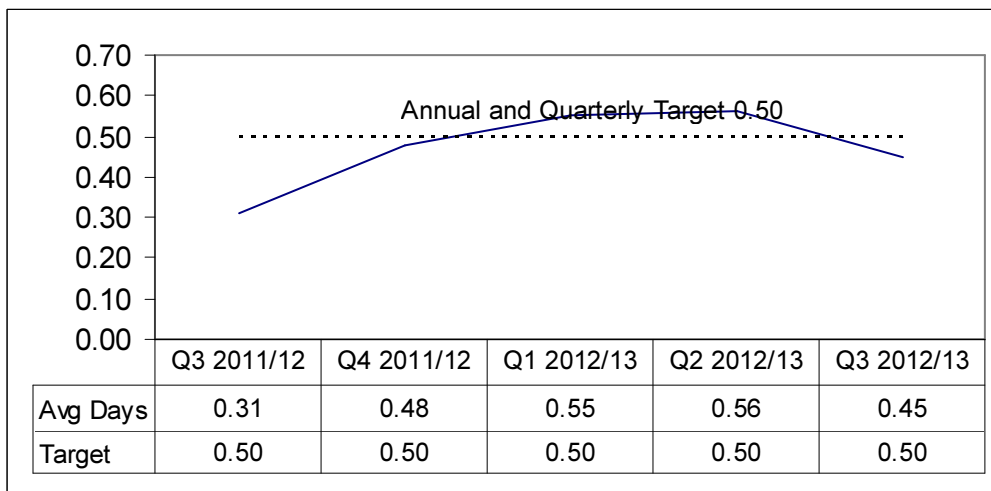
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

**HLS/014L Letting Times**



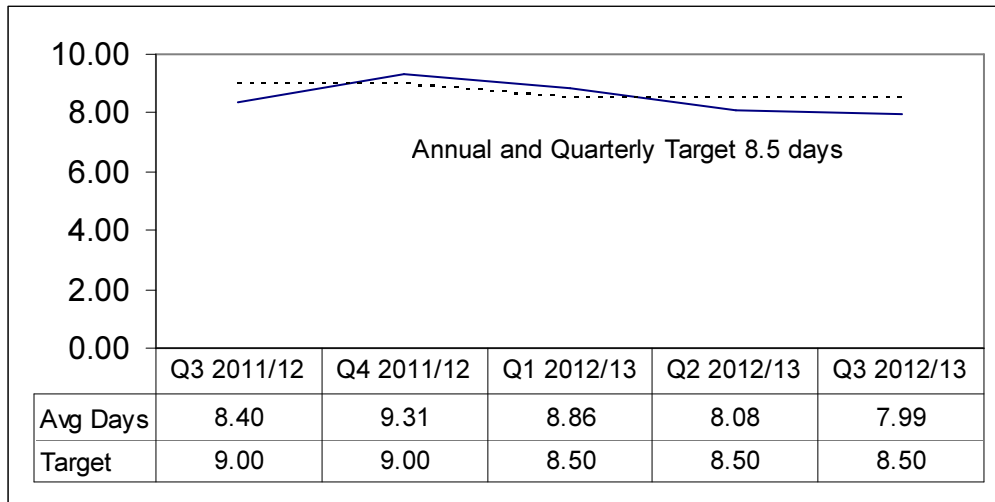
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

**HLS/10aL Emergency Repairs**



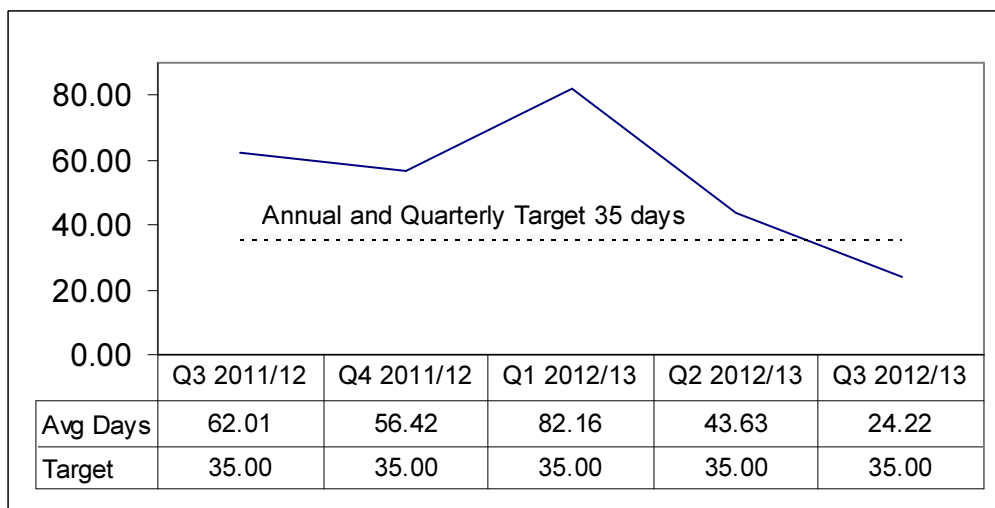
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

**HLS/10bL Urgent Repairs**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

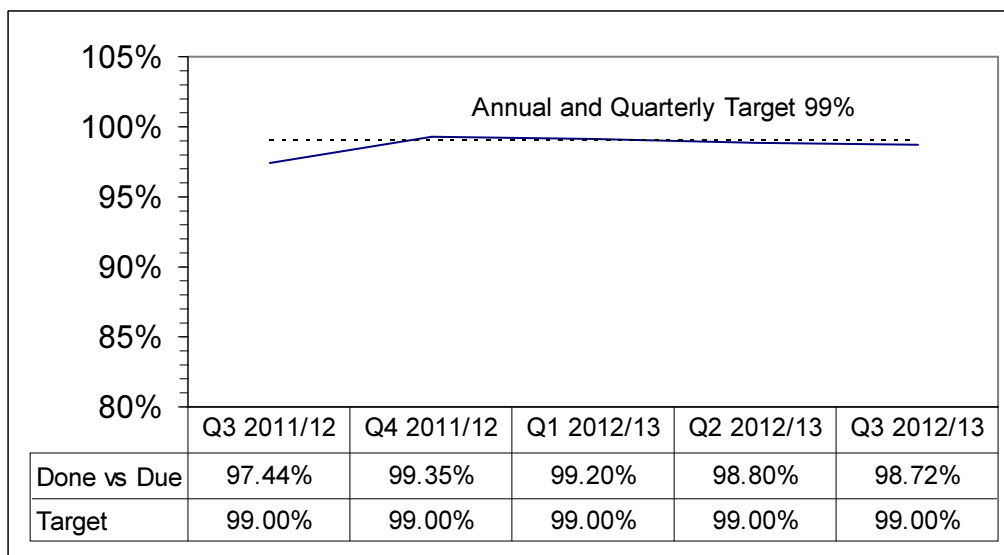
**HLS/10cL Non-urgent repairs**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

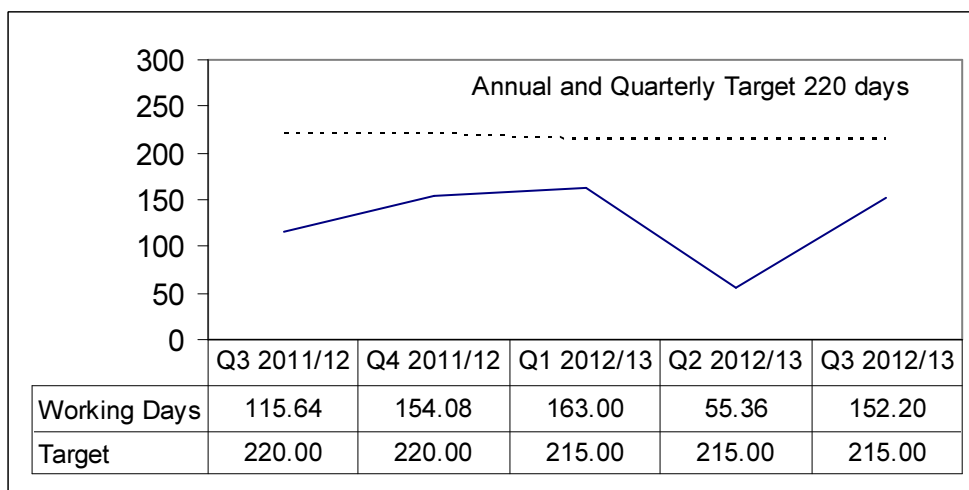
**APPENDIX 1**

**HPMM8L Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate**



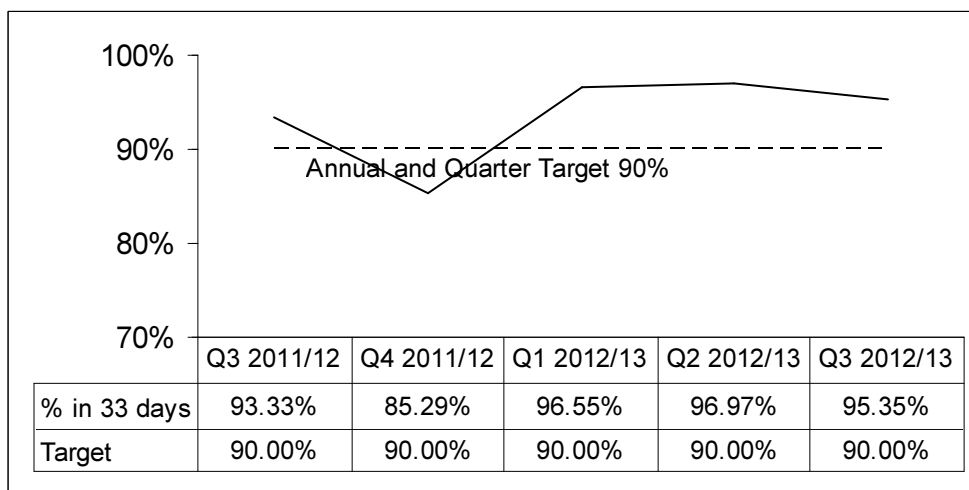
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

**HHA/002 Timeliness of discharging full homelessness duty**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

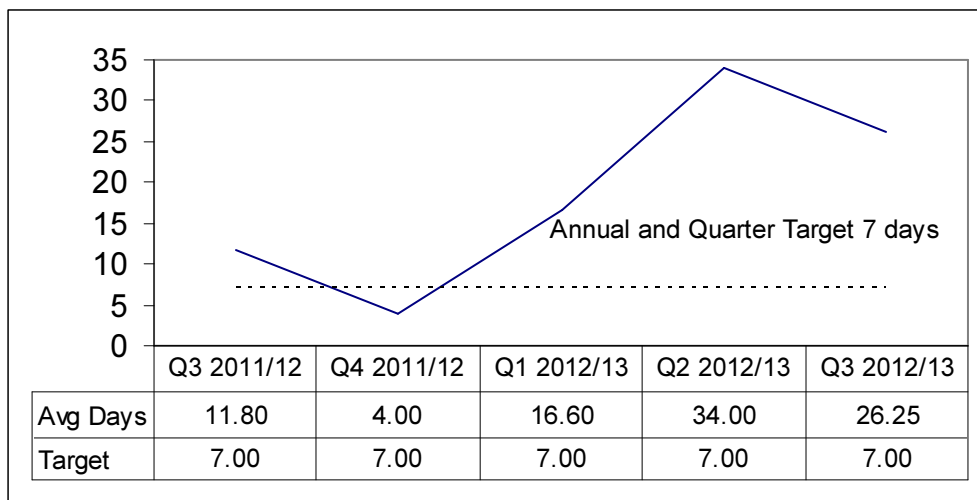
**HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within target**



An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

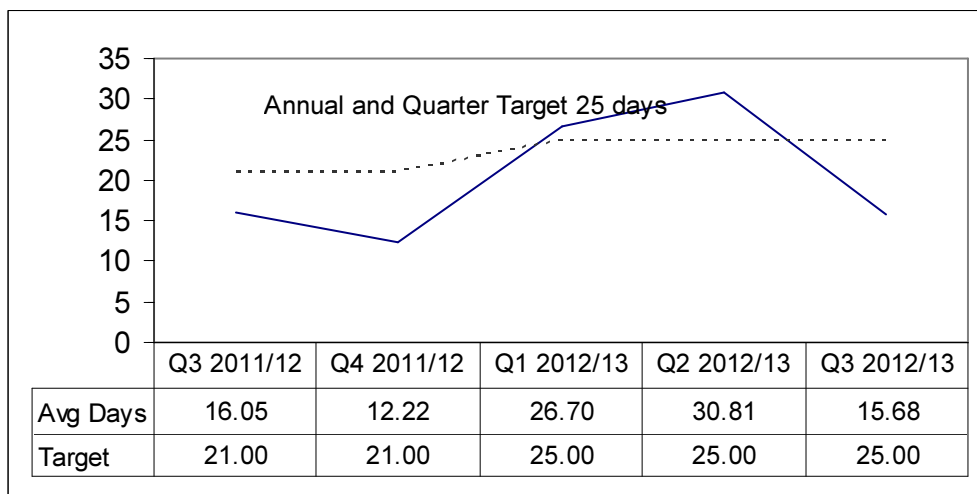
**APPENDIX 1**

**HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B accommodation**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

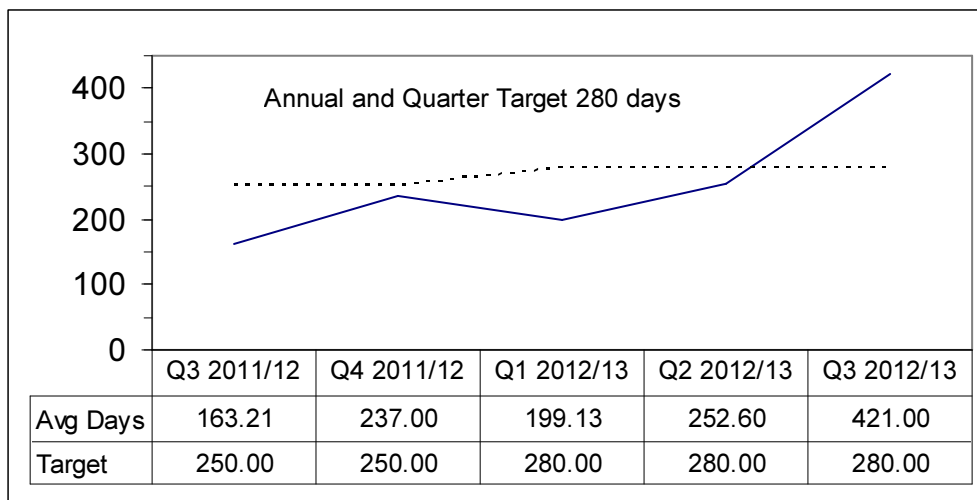
**HHA/017a Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B accommodation**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

**APPENDIX 1**

**HHA017b Average days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation**



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.