

Quarterly Performance Report – Housing Services

Report Author Head of Housing Services
Report Date 25 October 2012
Report Period Quarter 2: 1 July 2012 to 30 September 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

Date	Amendment	Amended by
05/11/12	Draft report for review by Head of Service.	Simon Abbott
13/11/12	Amendments requested by Head of Service	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:

Rent Collection

It is pleasing to see that the work carried out by the dedicated income team is improving rent collection with the outturn of the rent collected (HLS/006a) showing as green for the second consecutive quarter. Work is also being undertaken to reduce the current tenant arrears and the outturn of this figure reflects the improvements in this area.

The Income Team has introduced the Welsh Water Assist Scheme for low income families and tenants who suffer from certain medical conditions. The scheme can reduce the combined water and sewer charges by over 58% for some households

Capital Works

It is pleasing to report that the kitchen replacement programme is on track with 432 properties out of the 922 budgeted for this year now completed.

The Bathroom contract has provision for 56 properties this year. Surveys have been completed and the plan is to start on site in November. It is estimated that these will be completed ahead of the end of the financial year.

Repairs

Progress has been made in all areas of responsive repairs and these are reflected in the performance figures this quarter. The backlog of repairs has now been completed. There has been reclassification of some of the repairs backlog to “planned other” where replacement or renewal is appropriate. There has been an additional £250k assigned to this year capital programme to allow these works to be started.

Lean Reviews

Building on the success of previous lean reviews a new cohort of staff has been trained with two new lean reviews scheduled for Q3 focussed firstly on the customer interface in repairs and the second on former tenant arrears. The new practitioners will be supported by staff from previous reviews.

Performance Support

New initiatives to build a performance culture across all teams and all levels of the service are currently being implemented to ensure all staff members are focused on performance and service improvement. Activity in this area will be used to create management dashboards and move us towards benchmarking against other authorities and housing associations in our ongoing goal to perform in the top quartile.

**CBASS
(Warden Service)**

The rollout of the warden service is progressing well with six hub offices now open and three more in progress. The feedback from members visiting the offices has been encouraging.

Homelessness

Pressure continues to build in this area and the four generic officers have to undertake effective preventative measures to avoid household becoming homeless. Households are presenting with increasingly complex issues, and this has an impact on the amount of time taken in order to achieve a successful outcome and prevent homelessness.

It is however impossible to prevent homelessness in every case, and it is expected that the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation will increase despite efforts to minimise this.

There has been a significant drop in the number of days taken to discharge our homeless duty, however this is due to the type of household we have been able to find permanent accommodation for during this quarter.

**Welfare Reform &
Rental Income**




The potential impact of housing benefit reforms that threaten the ability of council tenants to pay their rent is proactively being addressed through a comprehensive programme of tenant engagement and targeted advice and support. Early November will see an all service mastermind group being used to review, validate and enhance the approach to the mitigation of the threat to rental income.













2 Summaries

2.1 Improvement Plan

The following shows a summary of progress on 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
	Limited Progress - delay in scheduled activity; not on track	Low - lower level of confidence in the achievement of outcome(s)
	Satisfactory Progress - some delay in scheduled activity, but broadly on track	Medium - uncertain level of confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)
	Good Progress - activities completed on schedule, on track	High - full confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)






Council Priority	Target Date	Progress RAG	Outcome Confidence	Commentary
7. To promote independent, healthy and fulfilled living in the community with the highest quality personalised and supportive social and health care services				
7.6 Modernise the warden service	March 2012			Completed.
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				
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 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	1
	Target missed but with in acceptable range	7
	Target achieved or exceeded	5




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	Q1 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q2 Outturn	RAG	Change
HHA/002 Timelessness of discharging homelessness duty	220 days	163 days	220 days	55.36 days		Improved
HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within 33 days.	90%	96.55%	90%	96.97%		Improved
HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B	7 days	16.6 days	7 days	34 days		Downturn see page 26
HHA/017A Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B	25 days	26.70 days	25 days	30.81 days		Downturn see page 27
HHA/017B Average number of days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation	280 days	199.13 days	280 days	262.60 days		Downturn

Housing Neighbourhood Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q1 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q2 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/006a* Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation	97.50%	96.29%	86.00%	96.38%		Improved
HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears	3.00%	3.98%	3.9%	4.20%		Downturn see page 17
HLS/013* Percentage rent loss due to empty property	2.00%	2.20%	2.00%	2.08%		Improved see page 19
HLS/014* Letting Times	42.00 days	44.10 days	42.00 days	50.29 days		Declined see page 20
Housing Asset Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q1 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q2 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/10a Emergency repairs	0.50 days	0.55 days	0.50 days	0.56 days		Downturn see page 23
HLS/10b Urgent Repairs	8.50 days	8.87 days	8.50 days	8.08 days		Improved
HLS/10c* Non-urgent repairs	35.00 days	82.16 days	35.00 days	43.63 days		Improved see page 24
HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate	99.00%	99.20%	99.00%	98.80%		Downturn see page 24











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	Green Predictive
CD08 Connah's Quay, Shotton And Queensferry Housing Renewal Area			March 2020
CD12b Housing Management			TBC
CD12c Housing Repairs And Maintenance Services			April 2013
CD12e Sheltered Housing			November 2013
CD38 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

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

<p>CL04 Affordable Housing</p>	<p>The overall risk in this area remains consistent however the issues around the SARC have considerably changed since its original draft. Time is being taken to review and refresh the SARC. The refreshed SARC will be considered by both DMT and CMT and reintroduced in Q3 reporting.</p>
<p>CD12a Housing Strategy</p>	<p>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. The new SARC will be considered by both DMT and CMT and introduced in Q3 reporting.</p>
<p>CD12d Homelessness</p>	<p>This SARC needs to be reconsidered in light with the risks posed by the current economic climate and welfare reform. The refreshed SARC will be considered by both DMT and CMT and reintroduced in Q3 reporting.</p>

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
Service Wide		
1a Staff Management	✓	
1b Customer Focussed Service	✓	
Neighbourhood Housing Management		
2a Quality of Life in Neighbourhoods	✗	See page 21
2b Maximisation of Rental Income	On-hold	Pending the start of the new manager
2c Best use of Housing Stock	✓	
2d Regional Housing Register	✓	
2e Customer Involvement in Neighbourhood Management	✓	
Housing Asset Maintenance		
3a Implement Staff Restructure	Revised	See page 24
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	✓	
Community Support Services		
4a Expanding Community Based Support Services	✓	
4b Homelessness & Advice Services	✗	See page 29
4c Service Review	✗	See page 27
4d Customer Involvement in Community Support Services	✓	

Housing Renewal		
5a Empty Homes	✓	
5b Private Sector Housing Strategy	✓	
5c Develop the Capacity for Renewal Services	✓	
5d Customer Involvement in Housing Renewal	✓	
Housing Strategy		
6a Local Housing Strategy	✓	
6b Affordable Housing	✗	See page 33
6c Performance Support	✓	
6d Business Systems	✓	
6e Customer Involvement in Housing Strategy	✗	See page 33

3 People & Customer Indicators

3.1 Sickness & Absence

Overall absence for Housing Services has increased from 5.31% to 5.85% in Q2 giving an average 3.33 FTE (full time employee) days lost in comparison to 3.03 days in Q1. The same quarter last year also stood at 3.3 FTE days.

The following table gives a breakdown by service area comparing Q2 2012/13 to Q2 2011/12:

Service Area	Q2 2011/12		Q2 2012/13		Change
	%	Days	%	Days	
Community Support Services	6.88%	3.90	4.90%	2.79	Improved
Housing Management	8.41%	4.60	5.10%	2.91	Improved
Housing Asset Management	5.41%	3.06	6.58%	3.75	Declined
Housing Renewal	0.45%	0.26	6.54%	3.73	Declined
Housing Strategy	0.00%	0.26	0.70%	0.40	Declined

The analysis of each service area is as follows:

Community Support Services

The management team have been focusing on the Attendance at Work policy and especially within the warden service, steps have been successfully taken to return employees to work who were on long term sick. The manager has also taken a proactive role in trying to deal with absence issues quickly before they escalate.

Housing Asset Management

This section has gained employees from another section within the directorate and an employee on long term sick, this coupled with other employees on long term sick within the quarter has had a significant impact on the absence figures. The figures have substantially increased from the last quarter and the same quarter last year.

On a positive note management have been actively carrying out all aspects of the Attendance at Work policy with several Stage 1 Capability meetings taken place within the quarter. The short term absence for the department has seen a noteworthy decrease with a reduction in employees hitting the absence triggers.

Housing Renewal

Historically this department has had low absence levels; however this quarter shows an increase in the absence figures from the last quarter and the comparable quarter last year.

Housing Strategy

Historically absence in this team is normally low however there has been an increase in this quarter from 0.00% in quarter 1 to 0.70% in quarter 2 which is still low and if sustained would bring the teams annual absence rate well below the corporate threshold.

Housing Management

There has been a noteworthy decrease in absence levels here, with a reduction from 5.91% in quarter 1 to 5.10% in quarter 2. More significantly from quarter 2 last year there has been a decrease from 8.41% to 5.10%. Whilst there has been an employee on long term sick, there has been a reduction in employees hitting the triggers. This could be attributed to the positive impact on staff now that the Service Review has been fully implemented and bedded in.

Conclusion

Whilst overall, absence levels have increased within Housing Services, there has been 2 noteworthy decreases in absence levels from Housing Management and Community Support Services. Managers are continuing to follow the "Attendance at Work Policy" and dealing with potential long term sickness early on. If absence continues in this way, housing will have a absence rate of 5.58% and 12.72 FTE Days Lost at the end of the year, compared to the Council target of 9.8 FTE Days Lost.

The 100% Attendance at Work awards have contributed towards a reduction in short term sickness, however further progress needs to be made with Long Term Sickness and managers dealing with long term sickness quickly.

Following a request from Overview and Scrutiny the absence figures for Housing were looked at again for quarter 1 and analysed between long term and short term sick. The results were that 70% of absence in Housing for quarter 1 was long term and 30% short term, it would appear this trend has continued for quarter 2.

3.2 Training & Appraisals

For the first 6 months of 2012-2013 Housing Services staff undertook 499 days of training (compared to 374 days for the same period – 2011-2012).

The emphasis has changed this year with more training days taken up delivering Management Qualifications (internally through Corporate Training) and Health & Safety training, in particular for Housing Asset Management. Training days devoted to Qualifications continues to reduce in line with our training strategy.

The following qualifications are currently being undertaken:

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

In the 12 months between 1 October 2011 and 30 September 2012, 73% of staff had appraisals. This has been an area of focus of for this quarter and represents and shows a significant improvement on the 50% reported in quarter 1.

The breakdown for each team is as follows:

Service Area	Complete	No Due	% Completed
Senior Management Team	7	7	100%
NHM East	9	9	100%
NHM North	9	11	82%
NHM South	12	12	100%
Income Team	6	6	100%
Housing Asset Management	79	145	54%
Community Support Services	19	19	100%
Housing Renewal	13	16	81%
Housing Strategy	2	3	67%
CBASS (Warden Service)	42	42	100%
Total	198	270	73%

It is pleasing to see from the breakdown that the increased focus in this area has improved outturns across all teams with 60% of all teams achieving 100%. This will continue to remain an area of focus for managers and team leaders.

3.3 Customer involvement

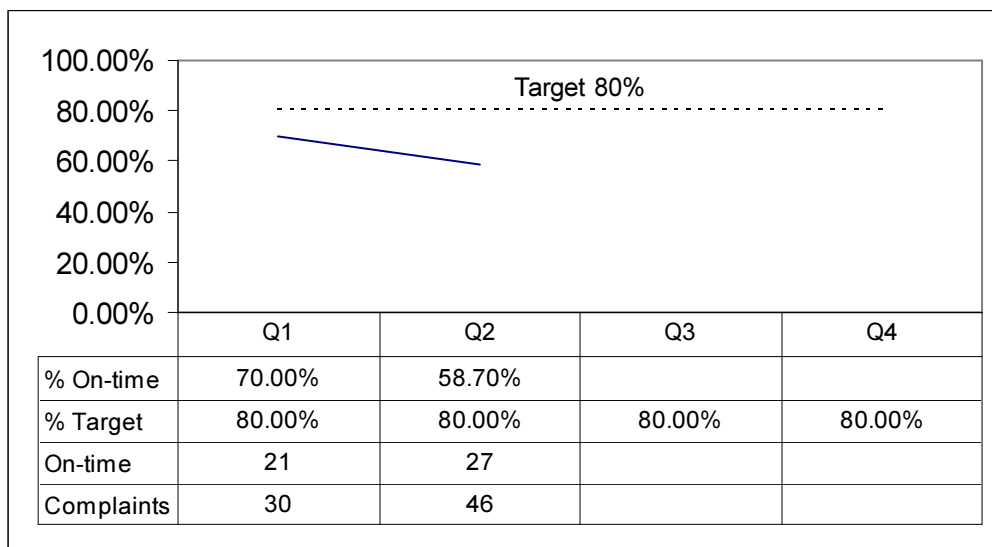
Customer involvement in shaping our services remains a priority for focus. Most teams across of the service now have their own customer involvement plan to ensure our varied range of customers are put at the heart of our services.

October will see our Autumn Tenants Conference which unlike previous conferences will see it split across two sessions, one in the afternoon and one in the evening to encourage a wider range of our tenants to attend.

For the first time a tenant representative has been involved in a lean review to bring a customer prospective directly into process reviews to improve services for our tenants. Other initiatives have seen the reality checker groups undertaking a review of repairs and tenant involvement in interviewing potential contractors for the capital works programme.

Customer involvement is important but for the improvement it can bring to the quality of services. It is hoped that by engaging customers in these projects the service will be able to raise satisfaction levels, improve standards and deliver a more efficient service.

3.4 Complaints



It is disappointing to see a downturn of the complaints handled in time this quarter compared to the Q1 outturn.

Analysis of the complaints data shows the following:




- 58.70% (27/46) of complaints were handled within the 10 day turnaround in Q2
- There is a downturn in performance from 70% last quarter and is considerably less than the 80% target
- Repairs continue to be the highest source of complaints with 30 complaints (65.22%)
- Only 60% (18) of the repairs complaints were handled on-time.

This will be an area of increased focus for Q3.

4 Neighbourhood Management

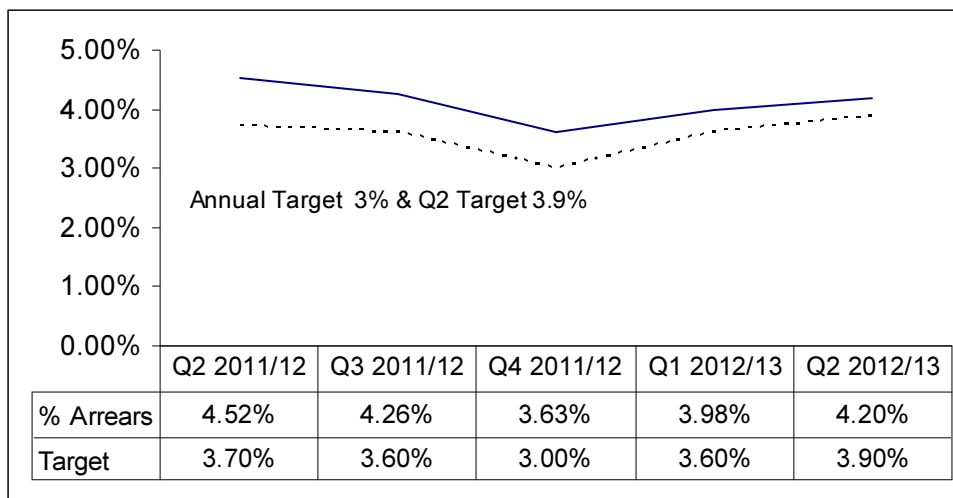
4.1 Performance Commentary

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/013**
Percentage rent loss due to empty property
-  **HLS/014**
Letting Times

Supporting information for these indicators is provided below:

HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears



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

The quarter 2 performance outturn, of 4.2% compares well with the Q2 2010/11 figure of 4.52% showing a considerable improvement on last years position at this time.

As with Quarter 1 12.13, the direct debit payment falls into week 27. The banded table below shows the wk27 comparison to give a clearer understanding of the rent arrears position. Overall the last 12 months arrears have reduced by almost £106K

Arrears band £'s	Accounts in Arrears Q2 (Wk27) 11/12	Accounts in Arrears Q2 (Wk27) 12/13	Total Outstanding Q2 (Wk27) 11/12	Total Outstanding Q2 (Wk27) 12/13
0-300	3266	3134	294,183	287,535
300-600	522	492	218,616	209,688
600-1000	284	248	219,533	190,951

1000-2000	253	222	344,479	303,947
2000-3000	80	77	194,519	184,426
3000-4000	21	18	72,641	59,273
4000-5000	4	6	16,952	26,440
5000-6000	3	3	16,472	15,721
6000-7000	1	0	6,358	
Grand Total	4434	4200	1,383,753	1,277,981

The overall banding table shows that:

- The overall number of accounts in arrears has continued to reduce.
- The number of accounts owing less than £1,000 has reduced.
- The number of accounts over £1,000 has reduced.

Following training from Welsh Water the Income Team has introduced the Welsh Water Assist Scheme for low income families and tenants who suffer from certain medical conditions. The scheme reduces the combined water and sewer charges to £5.00 per week (most tenants will normally pay between £9 and £12 per week.) There are 100 tenants currently on the scheme. This is a significant reduction for these households.

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

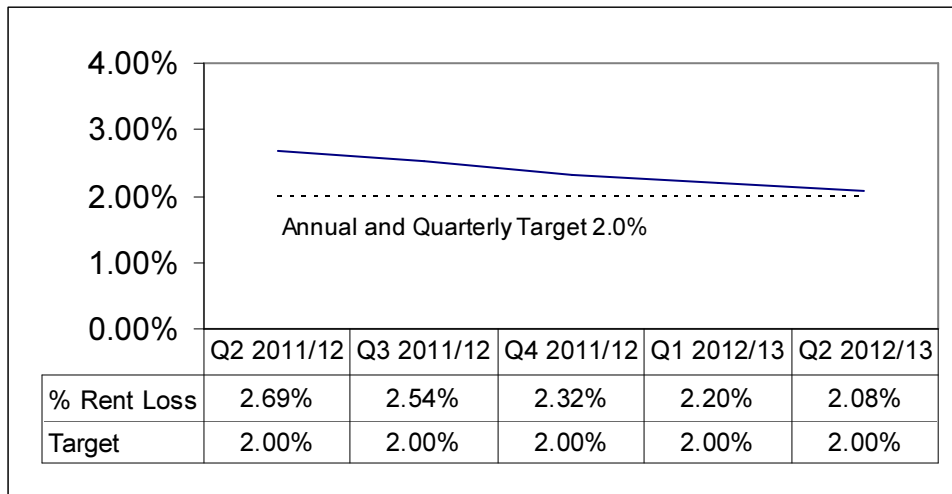
- Continuing the good work in tackling low level rent arrears cases;
- Reducing the number of arrears cases owing over £1k.

As contained within the 2011/12 Service Plan, work is continuing with the Procurement Unit to tender for an outside collection agency to recover former tenant rent arrears. This will be subject to a lean review during Q3 to confirm the business case for the outsourcing and map out our internal procedures for doing so.

A service wide mastermind group is being 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. The outcomes of this will be reported in the Q3 report.

Overall analysis of the figures shows that performance is expected to continue steadily improving through Q3 and Q4.

HLS/013 Percentage rent loss due to empty property



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

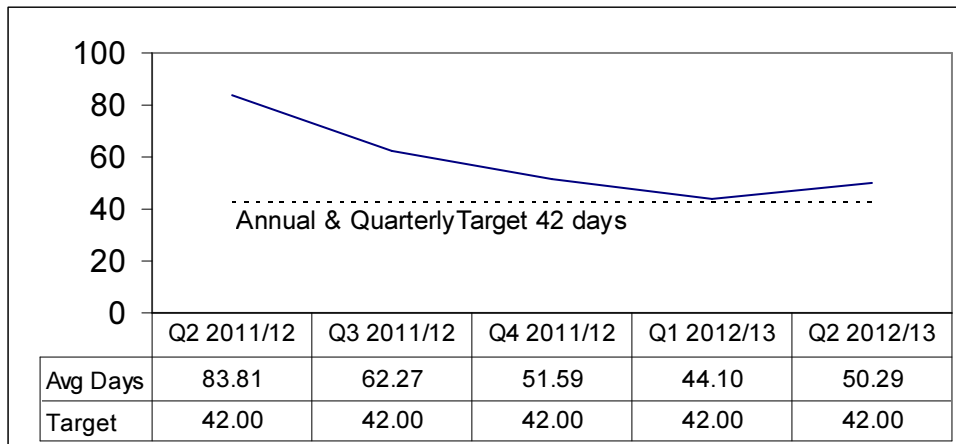
It is pleasing to see that the quarter 2 performance shows continued and sustainable improvement against last years quarterly figures bringing us closer to our annual target of 2%.

The table below shows that there were a total of 146 lets for Q2 12/13, which is an increase when compared to the previous quarter (Q1) total lets of 134.

Quarter	Became vacant	No of lets
Q2 11/12	126	125
Q3 11/12	137	160
Q4 11/12	136	149
Q1 12/13	147	134
Q2 12/13	146	148

The number of properties let in the past 12 months (591) exceeds those that became vacant (566.) It is clear that to continue improving performance in void rent loss and to ultimately reach the year end target set of 2%, the number of lets need to be at a higher level than the number of new voids for the remainder of the year. Significant management effort is focused on ensuring that continuous improvement is sustained in this area.

HLS/014 Letting Times



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

It is disappointing to see a downturn of performance in this area following quarter on quarter improvement in this area.

The table below shows the numbers of days (rounded) for each stage of the letting process.

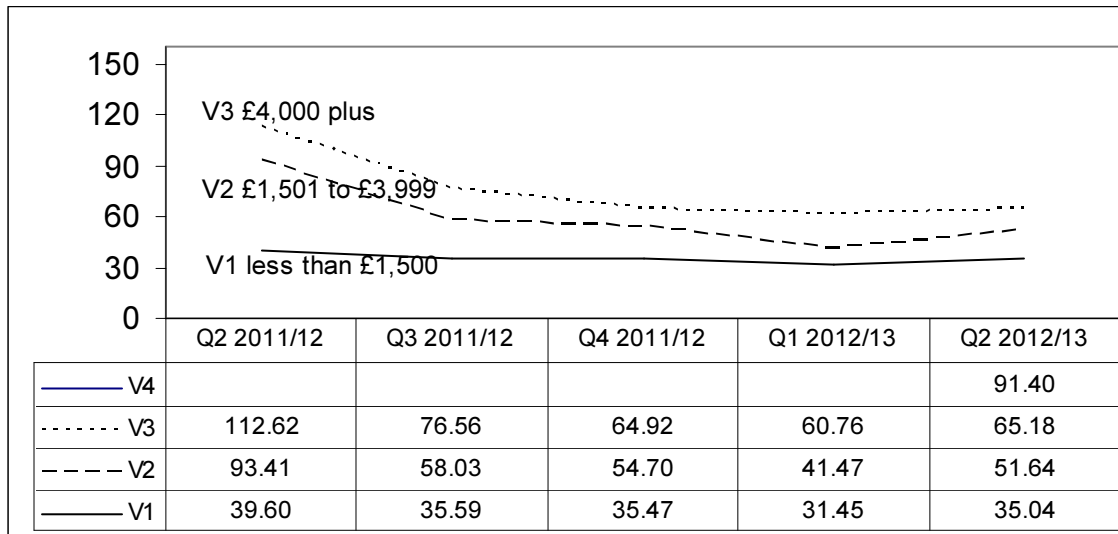
Period	Waiting Days	Work Days	Letting Days
Q4 2010/11	24	32	22
Q1 2011/12	30	30	15
Q2 2011/12	37	31	16
Q3 2011/12	25	26	11
Q4 2011/12	18	22	11
Q1 2012/13	15	21	7
Q2 2012/13	14	21	10

Despite a 1 day improvement in the waiting time and the work time sustained, the letting times indicate a downturn of 3 days showing the area which has caused the overall downturn in the indicator of 50.29 days.

The reason for increase of letting days has been investigated and has revealed a number of lets which have been exceptionally long due to delays caused by medical issues of tenants. There were 6 where tenants were in hospital when been allocated a property delaying the start date of the tenancy. The most severe of these cases was 173 days. A further 4 lets have been delayed whilst waiting for assessment by Occupation Therapists. It has been calculated that if these exceptions were removed from the calculations that we would have sustained the 7 days letting period.

It will be a focus of Neighbourhood Housing Managers to work with our colleagues in social services to find a reasonable solution for these cases that balances the needs of the tenants with that of the service's need to let properties in a tight timeframe.

The following graph shows that the issues documented above have impacted on all classifications of void:



The outturn figures exclude the V4 category of properties that cost over £6k to repair as these are classed as refurbishments. There have been 10 such properties let during Q2. These properties will be reflected in the graph from Q3 onwards.

V2 properties (costing between £1501 and £3,999 to repair) were again the biggest group in Q2 with 50 properties.

Weekly meetings are being arranged between Asset Management and Neighbourhood Housing Management to give a greater priority to addressing performance blockages. In addition monthly meetings will be held by the Head of Service.

4.2 Service Plan Updates

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area. Two areas have been delayed as follows:

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)

Delays for the recruitment of staff are attributed to the Job Evaluation Process, which 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 January 2013.

Improve ASB service by implementing new procedures and IT system.

The original IT package for managing anti social behaviour (Contact Management) presented to the service by CAPITA was unable to meet the demands of the service.

CAPITA will be presenting a new “in development” ASB module to us for consideration in October. The system is expected to be available January 2013.




4.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

5 Housing Asset Maintenance

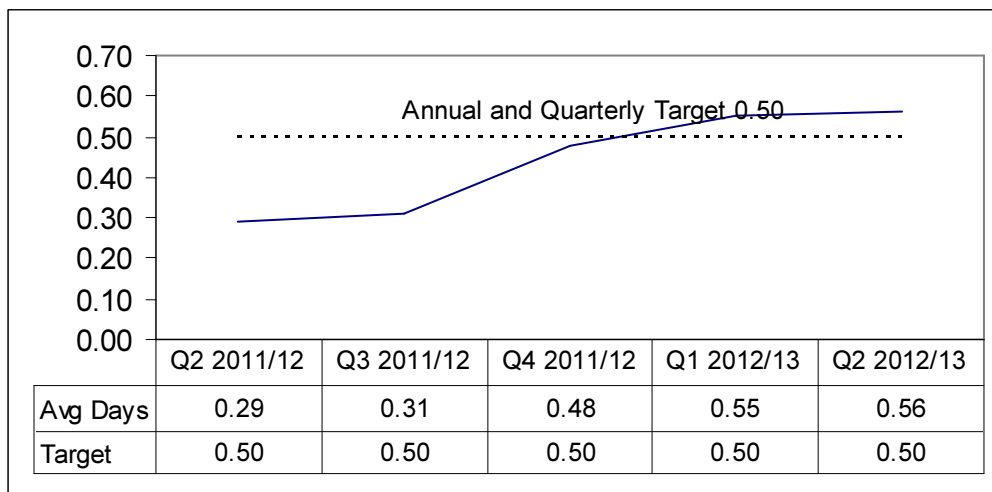
5.1 Performance Commentary

It is pleasing to note that performance in the urgent category has improved this quarter. Targets were not met for the following indicators for Housing Asset Management:

-  **HLS/10a**
Emergency repairs
-  **HLS/10c**
Non-urgent repairs
-  **HPMM8**
Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate

Supporting information for these indicators is provided below:

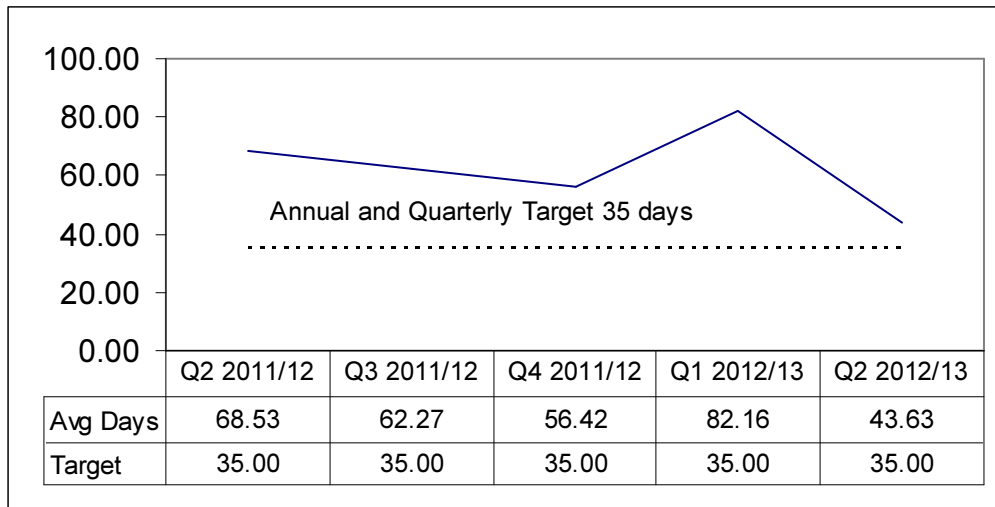
HLS/10a Emergency Repairs



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

Quarter 2 overall is a positive improvement for the Housing Asset Service in terms of performance. The average repair time for Emergency Repairs is slightly above the 0.5 day target. The main reasons for this are data transfer to PDA's and additional work being raised on Emergency job tickets. If data transfer to PDA's is not immediate or a device is in an area of no signal this has an impact on the performance particularly in the emergency category. Analysis on all data and categories is now taking place to ensure that additional works are raised on separate works instructions and also to verify correct classification of jobs.

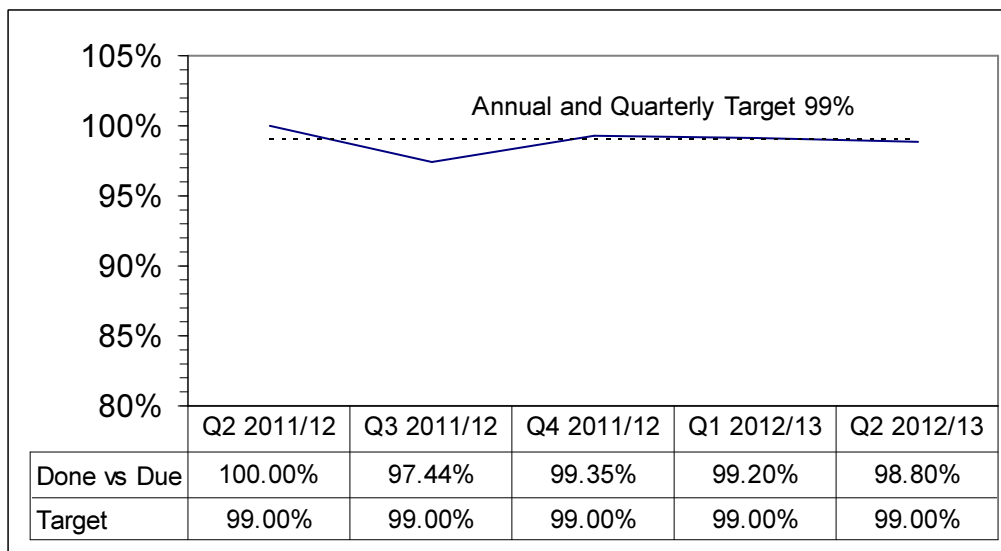
HLS/10c Non-urgent repairs



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

Non-urgent repairs have improved significantly over the quarter reducing from 82.16 to 43.63 days. A large amount of older jobs were completed in quarter 1 as we continued to reduce the repairs backlog which resulted in a significant impact on the performance figures. As these older jobs have now been completed the results can be seen in the significant improvement during this quarter. The outturn in quarter 2 is the best performance in this category for at least 3 years. Work now continues to effectively manage jobs in this category and to improve performance on inspections relating to non-urgent repairs.

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 are subject to our no-access procedures.

5.2 Service Plan Updates

The new Interim Asset Manager has taken the opportunity to review current and planned work streams in order to assess the current position and plan effectively to

realise the most improvements for the service over future months and the long term. There are a significant amount of projects underway and planned for the service and the Asset Manager is keen to ensure that each project is managed and embedded effectively as it is only then that the projects will be a success and deliver the most benefits to the service.

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 we are managing to maintain a Green RAG status on the majority of our indicators. Unfortunately the following indicators are a casualty of the current economic climate this quarter:



HHA/016

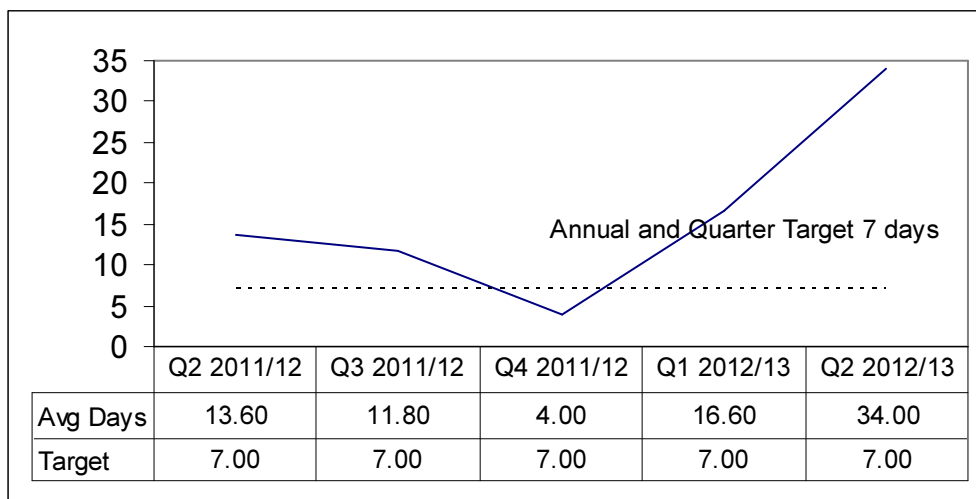
Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



HHA/017A

Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B

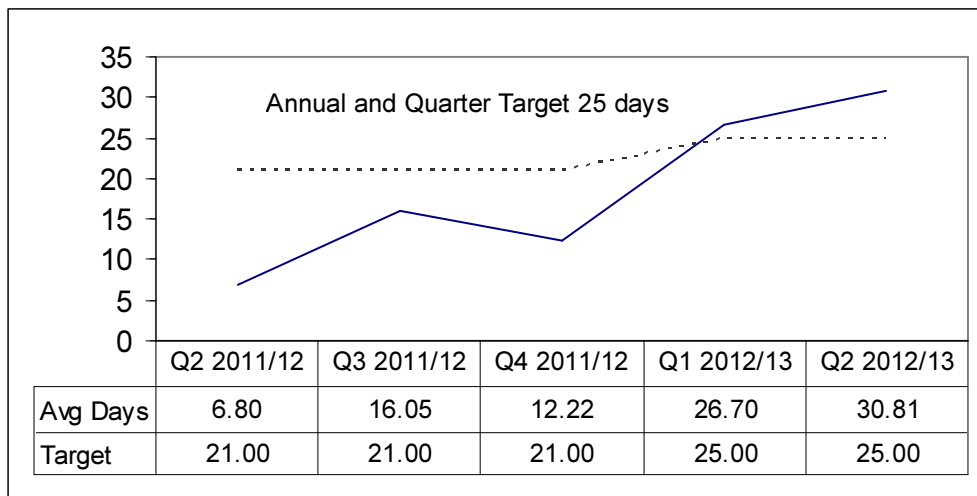
HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



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

During this quarter 7 households with children were accommodated in B&B. The number of days have increased significantly owing to the fact that we had to accommodate two households that were Flintshire County Councils tenants who were fleeing violence. Both families were too large to access refuge accommodation therefore both families had to be accommodated for a total of 66 days until the Neighbourhood Management Team resolved the issues.

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



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

This quarter 27 households were placed in B&B with 20 of those being single people. Unfortunately this client group is also the most difficult to rehouse due to a lack of suitable and affordable single person accommodation.

6.2 Service Plans

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

4c Service Review

Plans for the review of this service area have been delayed to the departure of two Senior Managers and the outcomes of the Development & Resources Restructure consultation.

6.3 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 £631,000. This figure comprises of £521,000 on-going annual payments and £110,000 one-off lump sum payments. (In the first six months of the current financial year the welfare rights team have generated £1.2 million in benefit gains for residents.)
- Over 462 Flintshire residents received specialist advice and assistance from a welfare rights worker with their welfare benefit and/or tax credit problem. Of these residents, 64 received advice and representation in connection with appealing an adverse decision on their benefit entitlement before a First-Tier Tribunal.
- Customer feedback received from residents who accessed the service shows that 91% view the caseworker 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

- *Impacts of the Welfare Reform Act 2012* - the specialist caseworker service is struggling to balance the demand from residents who are experiencing benefit problems and the request to provide support to initiatives that are targeting groups of residents who are experiencing changes to their welfare benefit entitlement, e.g. the 1,200 FCC tenants impacted by the bedroom tax, etc.
- *Increased Government funding to the Court Service to reduce the UK wide backlog of appeals* – the specialist caseworker service, due to the increasing number of requests from residents for assistance with appealing adverse decisions, is struggling to gather medical/other supporting evidence and prepare the appellant's submission, etc, before the appeal is listed for hearing by the Court Service.

Future

- *Maximising the use of advice resources within internal/external services* - the development of initiatives being progressed by the Flintshire Advice Management Board, e.g., 'Single Access Gateway', will promote and enable effective partnership working amongst service providers and increase their ability to meet more of the demands for advice and support from residents.

- *Undertake a lean review of the Advice and Homelessness service* – improving the journey of customers who access the caseworker service and developing an integrated database that supports the delivery of the caseworker service.

Service Plan Updates

4b Advice & Homelessness Service

Progress is being made on work streams to mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform across the authority, including:

- All FCC tenants under occupying their homes have been identified and will be offered appropriate advice and support to address issues that the reduction in their housing benefit entitlement will create.
- Proactive partnership working with the North Wales Credit Union to raise awareness of their financial services and to promote financial capability throughout the County.

8 Housing Renewal

8.1 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 28 people came forward requiring assistance. 14 property surveys were undertaken and scheduled work will now be taken forward for loan support. A total of 26 loans were completed during this quarter, with a work value of £128,637. 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.

The Service has now approved loan applications which total the budget available for 12/13. Therefore, whilst work already approved will continue, regrettably no further loans will be approved until the new financial year 13/14. An exception to this will be repayment loans, available through the Council's loans administrator Street UK, as this offers the Council the opportunity to use the revolving nature of the fund to offer some support on an ongoing basis. The Service has placed £50K with the administrator for this purpose. It is hoped that a further expansion of this Service in 13/14 will make the support more sustainable, given the ongoing pressures capital funding.

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 remaining at 98 days, compared to 240 days in quarter 2 of last year 11/12. 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. Across the housing renewal capital programme a current shortfall of £128K is forecast and the Service has identified areas it can delay projects so as to ensure no impact on the DFG Service and no overspend on total budgets.

Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area

The existing Group Repair contract came to an end during Quarter 1, with a total of 104 properties completed since work first began. A tender has been put together for a new contractor to deliver the 2nd Phase of the Group repair scheme and to date 120 of the 180 eligible properties have been surveyed. A tender exercise was undertaken during Quarter 2 and completed in September. Three companies were shortlisted for interview based upon their tender return.

However, the company judged successful following the interview subsequently failed the Council's financial appraisal of their business and we were not in a position to appoint them. The 2nd and 3rd placed contractors at interview stage did not provide us with the confidence that they had the necessary skills and experience for

appointment. It has therefore been decided that a new open tender exercise will take place with view to appointment early in the new year.

Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP)

The energy efficiency measures being installed as part of Phase 2 of the CESP programme comprising Connah's Quay and Greenfield continued in this Quarter. A total of 40 new heating systems and 40 external wall insulations took place. In support of the CESP programme two Arbed bids were submitted by the service for Hollywell Central and Mostyn. The two bids were successful and levered in a further £303,166 to the Service, offering us an opportunity to further reduce the cost of work to homeowners. All CESP works must be completed by the end of Quarter 3 before the introduction of a replacement funding mechanism. This project is now used by Npower (our funder) as their promotional model and has been presented to the Scottish Government. The Service is pleased that for every £1 of Council money spent on this programme, £5 has been levered in from other sources. The Service would therefore seek to sustain investment in this area.

Additional Energy Efficiency Work

The Service received notification that its Arbed bid for Holywell Central had provisionally been accepted and meetings are taking place with Welsh government's chosen contractor Wilmot Dixon to take the scheme forward. The Scheme will operate on a similar basis to the CESP Scheme. Flintshire has also been successful in its bid for Green Deal business case support in conjunction with Wrexham County Borough Council. Welsh government are supporting the preparation of a business case to assess whether a financially sustainable model for the provision of Green Deal loans across North Wales is feasible. Further information on this project will be provided in the Quarter 3 Performance Report. The energy efficiency work of the Service has been recognised, being shortlisted for a CIH Housing Award in the category of 'Outstanding Leadership by a Local Authority.'

Empty Homes

Welsh Government have finalised the arrangements for delivery of the national House into Homes Initiative during Quarter 1. Funding of £10m is being provided for interest free loans across Wales, with the aim of returning 5000 long term vacant properties (across Wales) back in to use over the next 5 years. The funding will be devolved across the 6 regions and as Members are aware, Flintshire has been asked to lead for North Wales region. This will involve the Housing Renewal Service managing a £2.4m recycable loan fund, which includes Flintshire's share valued at £482K. Flintshire submitted the first claim for £258K during the Quarter, which included a £150K claim for Flintshire.

In terms of the scheme, Flintshire has now received expressions of interest from 10 property owners, with total potential loans valued at £500K. Those applications need to be assessed to ensure they meet the scheme criteria. However, assuming they do, Flintshire's allocation is already more than committed and a waiting list will be prepared.

Work is ongoing to enhance the empty homes service for the county. A data cleansing exercise has seen all properties suspected as being empty across the county surveyed. The actual number of properties identified as empty is 554, these

are now subject to the empty homes procedures aimed at bringing them back into use.

During this Quarter the new 3 stage letters have been prepared and will be sent out during Quarter 3. These letters are an attempt to further engage with the owners of empty properties, offering encouragement and support in the initial letter, through to the threat of enforcement action in letter 3. 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. On this basis a more challenging target will be set for returning empty homes in to use during the 13/14 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 assessment in Quarter 4. It is then envisaged that the Customer Service Excellence approach will be rolled out across the Housing Service.

8.2 Service Plan Updates

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

8.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

9 Housing Strategy

9.1 General Update

The following are brief updates on Housing Strategies main functions:

Local Housing Strategy

The new Local Housing Strategy has been completed and will inform the programme of support for a range of supporting strategies.

Performance Support

Plans to further enhance the Performance Support Role in housing continue. This quarter has seen the formation of a new housing lean team to assist in the improvement of performance and services. New initiatives for Q3 will include the introduction of service wide mastermind groups to pool the shared knowledge and skill base of staff across the service in dealing with problems and challenges as well as the first of a series of performance workshops aimed at developing a performance culture across the service.

9.2 Service Plan Updates

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

6b Affordable Housing

The development of the Affordable Housing Strategy has been delayed whilst awaiting adoption of the Local Housing Strategy. The first draft of the strategy is now expected in January 2013 and will include measures to inform robust monitoring of both housing delivery and the marketing activity for this area.

6e Customer Involvement in Housing Strategy

A formal plan will be put into place by Q3 for customer involvement. Aims of the service area to engage its varied customer base this year are described below:

Elected Members:

Engagement with elected members will be centred on regular and on-going series of briefing seminars. These will be aimed at raising member's awareness of current and emerging topic areas and will comprise a series of short presentations, given by key internal and external stakeholders, followed by a Q&A session. The intention for these sessions is to be informal and aimed at prompting discussion with members, leading to potentially more formalised working groups where policy may need to be formulated.

Ongoing Activities:

Two member seminars have been held (Empty Properties and Gypsies & Travellers). The programme of future sessions is included within the member's calendar and will continue with briefings held on a six weekly cycle.

External Stakeholders:

Involvement of key external stakeholders will be conducted through the Flintshire Housing Partnership (FHP). These key stakeholders comprise RSLs, developers and

representative bodies. The agenda of FHP meetings may be set by any of the participating organisations and in addition may influence the work programme of the sub-groups of the FHP.

Ongoing Activities:

The FHP meets quarterly. Following a self-assessment exercise a review of the terms of reference of the partnership will now be undertaken.

Internal Stakeholder:

Internal stakeholders can be classified into two principle groups:

- (a) Housing service areas where involvement primarily concerns engagement in the development of policy, strategy and engagement in responses to internal and external consultations, and
- (b) Directorates and service areas from outside the housing service area but within FCC.

Involvement with these groups encompasses a range of different approaches, tailored appropriately to the topic or issue.

Ongoing Activities:

Current involvement has focused on the development of the Flintshire LHS, Affordable Housing Strategy, Empty Property Strategy and Homeless Prevention Strategies. Future activity will include preparing responses to current Welsh Government consultations

9.3 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)

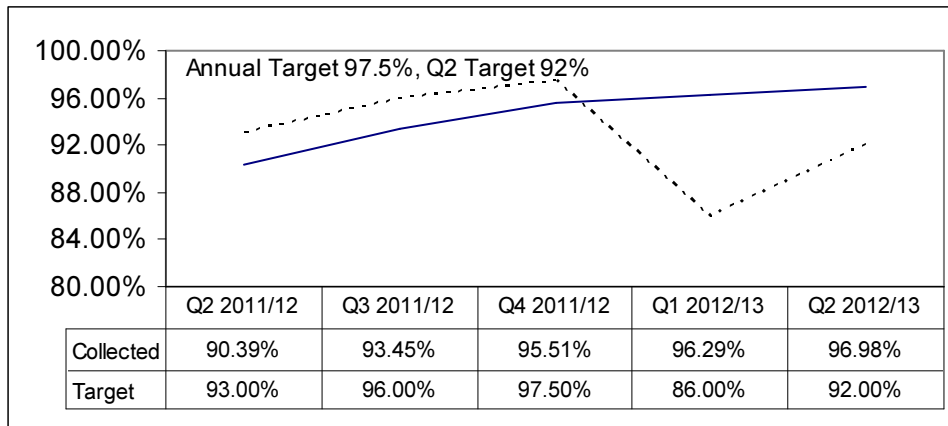
Housing Strategy has taken the opportunity to refresh the SARCs on Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing as part of an exercise to transform the SARCS to a new format recommended by Internal Audit.

9.4 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

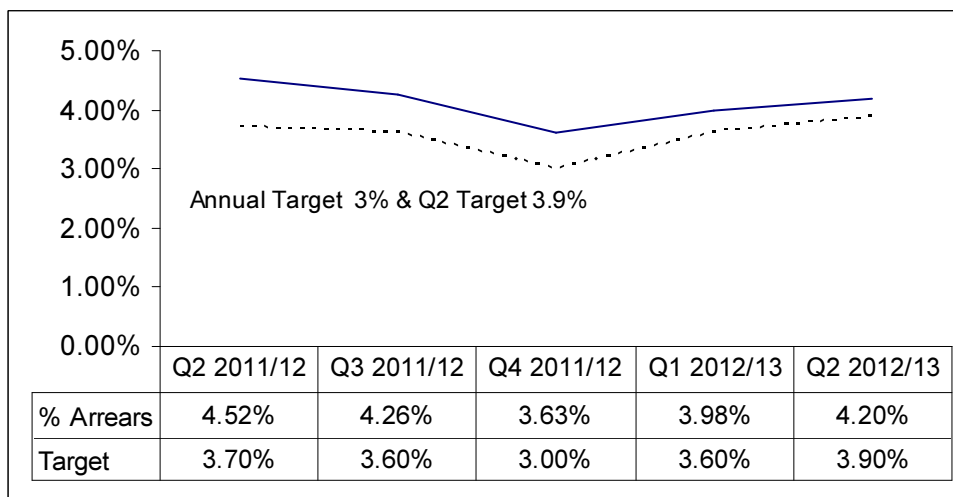
Appendix A – Performance Graphs

HLS/006a* Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



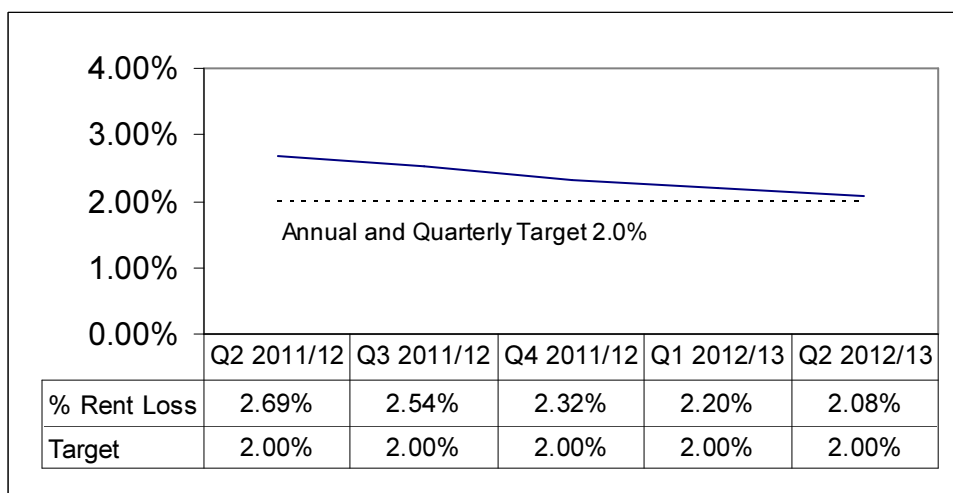
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears



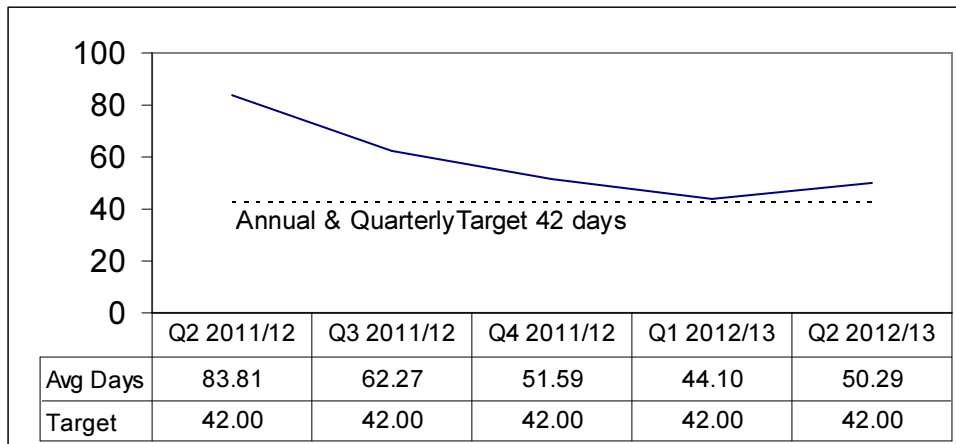
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/013* Percentage rent loss due to empty property



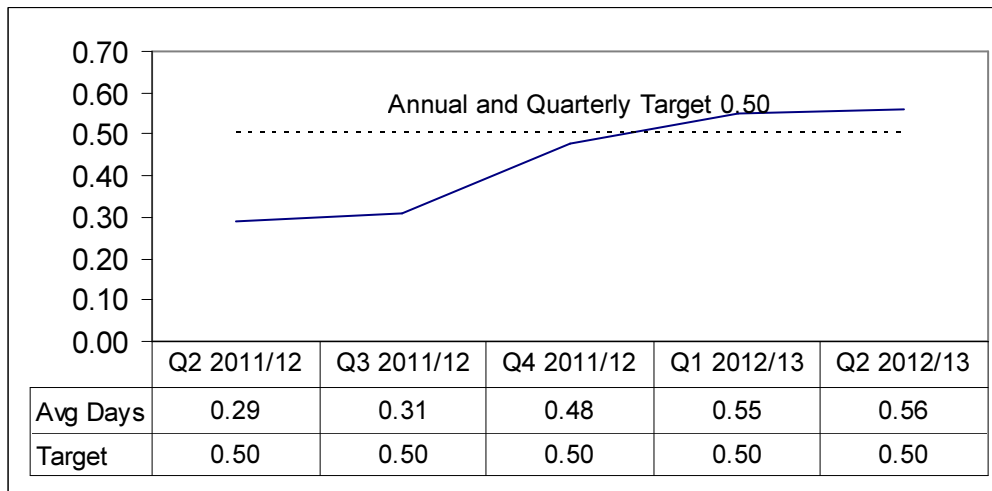
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/014* Letting Times



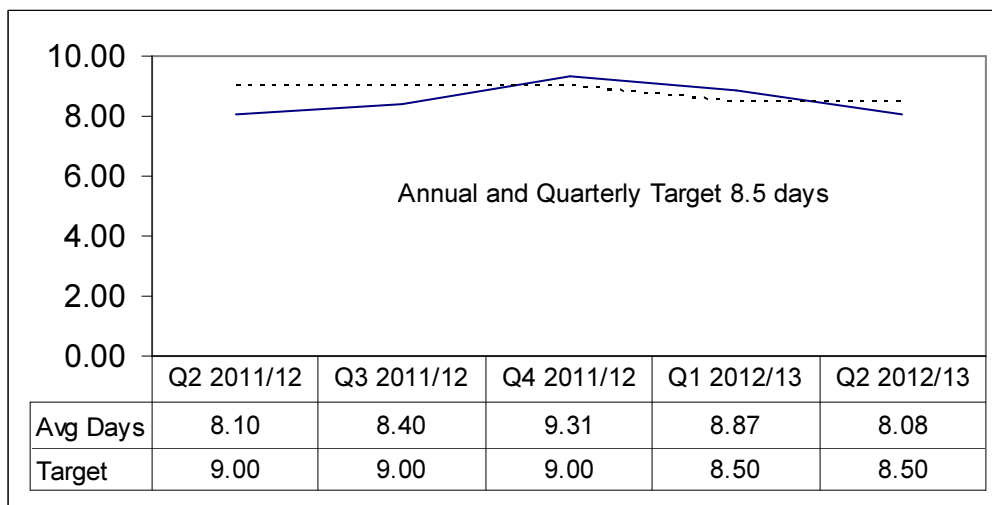
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10a Emergency Repairs



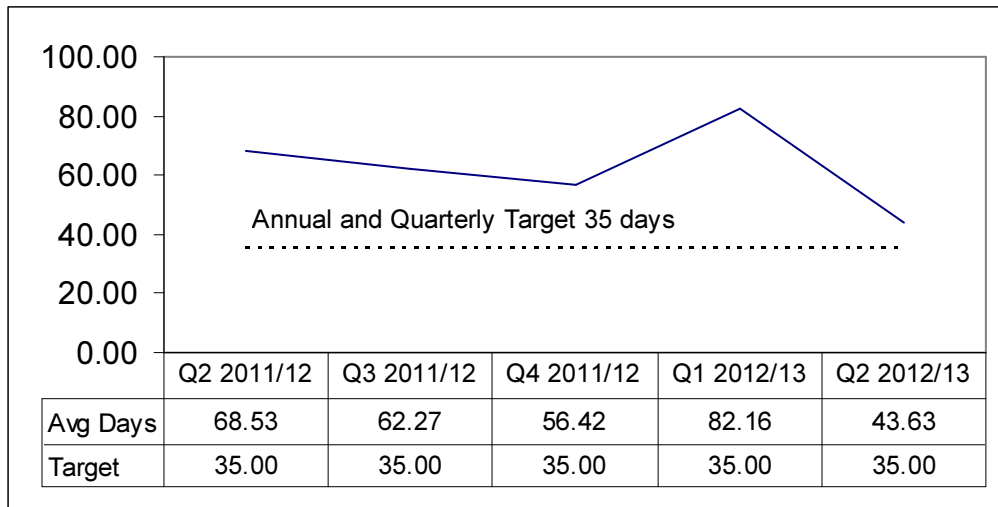
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10b Urgent Repairs



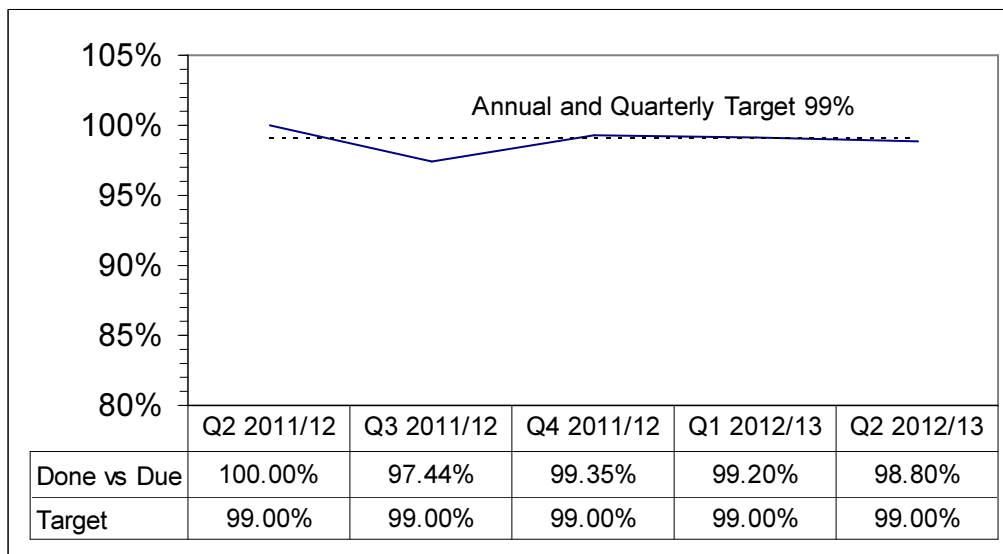
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10c* Non-urgent repairs



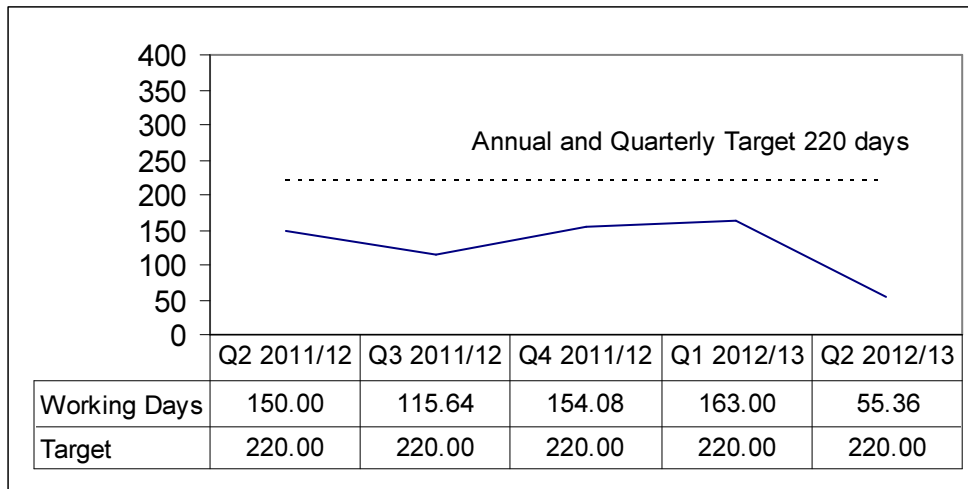
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate



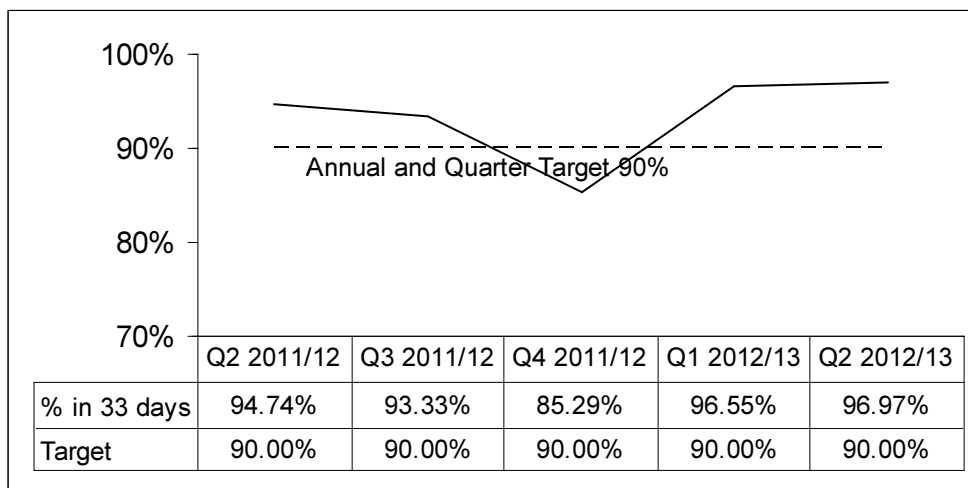
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/002 Timeliness of discharging full homelessness duty



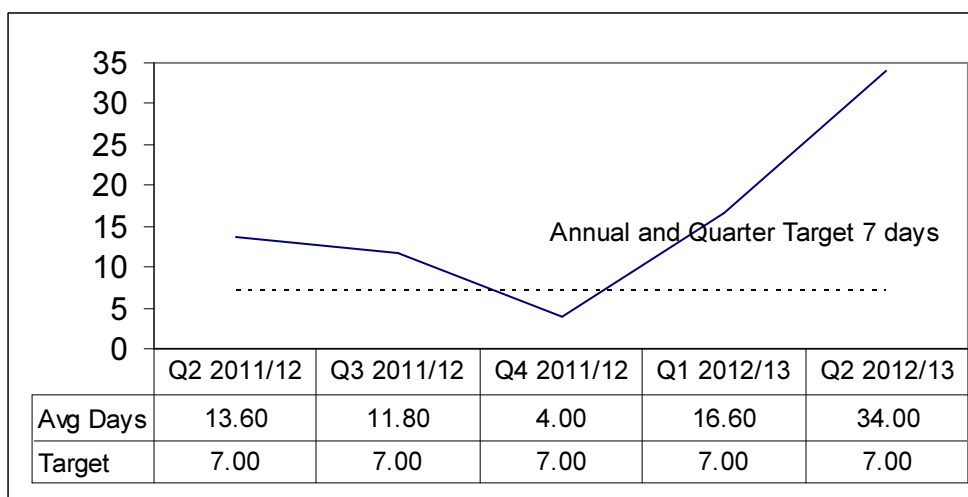
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within target



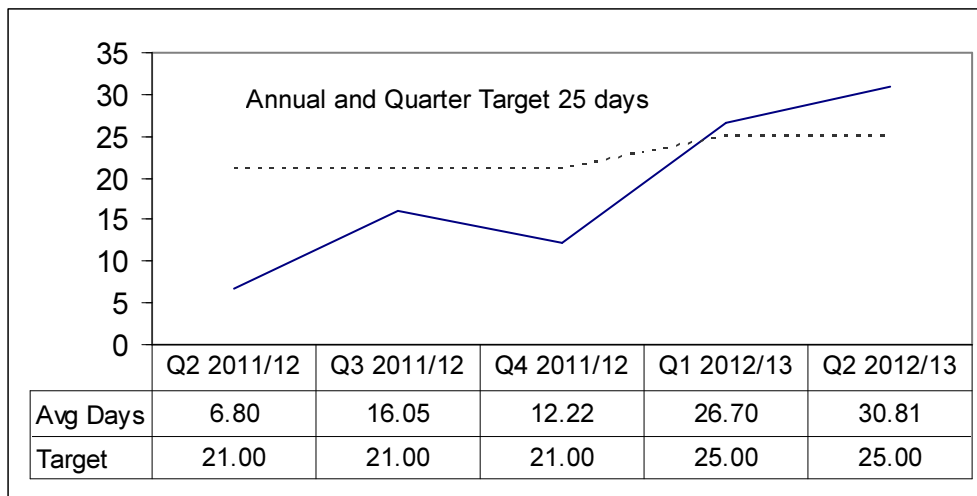
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

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



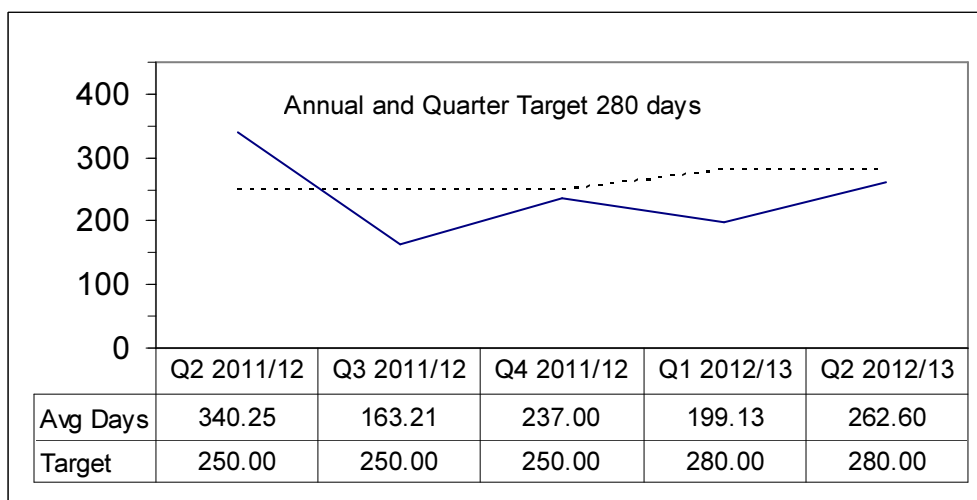
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

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.

HHA017b Average days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation



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