

Quarterly Performance Report – Housing Services

Report Author Head of Housing Services
Report Date 9 May 2013
Report Period Quarter 4: 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013

Introduction

The report is produced on a quarterly basis and provided to Cabinet 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
27/04/13	Draft report for review by Head of Service.	Simon Abbott
09/05/13	Second draft for review and approval by the Head of Service	Simon Abbott
13/05/13	Amendments requested by Head of Service	Simon Abbott
29/05/13	Amended DFG outturn.	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 within 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

1.1 2012/13 and Q4 Report Highlights

The year has been full of successes and challenges across all service areas. The following are some of those encountered during the year:

Performance Outturns It is pleasing to see that 4 out of 5 improvement targets have seen improvement this year.

Quarterly Performance has both improved and been maintained in many of our areas and can be seen in the quarterly indicators. The RAG status of our indicators this quarter is 4 green, 6 amber and 3 red.

Performance is very much a focus area for Housing Services and a broader range of stretching targets for 2013/14 have been proposed and agreed with members at the recent target setting exercise.

2013/14 will see us replace some of our indicators with HouseMark's benchmarking indicators. For the first time we will be to see how our performance in many areas compares with both other local authorities and RSL's. These new indicators will be introduced gradually over the next 12 months alongside the existing ones.

Targets and indicators have also been defined for those service areas not currently measured and will include performance indicators around anti-social behaviour which is of interest to members.

Rental Income It is pleasing to see a steady and sustainable improvement in our rental income and collection of rent arrears, despite the worsening economic climate and the programme of Welfare Reforms. This area remains a priority for incremental improvement.

The team have been piloting new initiatives to support customers falling into arrears, and have been proactive about addressing the risks posed by welfare reform. For example, all those who were identified as being affected by the changes to Housing Benefit were contacted during November 2012, and subsequently to make individual plans to mitigate the impact. Examples of this include, helping tenants to downsize to smaller properties, provision of advice in relation to lodgers, and proactive work to increase tenants income and reduce debts, such as making applications for Welsh Water Assist. Further opportunities to engage in this type of proactive work have been identified, and work is ongoing

into 2013-14.

**Voids Turnaround
Times & Rental Loss**

We have exceeded our target of reducing income loss from void properties. The Q4 outturn was 1.9% a significant improvement on our target of 2.0% with 1.6% of our available housing stock void at year end.

Although void turnaround times improved when compared to the comparable quarter from last year (48.47 days compared to 51.59 days Q4 2011/12) we have still not met the 42 day target.

Voids turnaround times remain a disappointment for the service and is the focus of ongoing programme of review and change to bring about improvements in this area.

Repairs

Repairs and maintenance teams have seen marked improvements in the latter part of the year. A new senior management team has been established and this has brought with it a proactive focus on performance improvement. It is expected that further improvement will be seen over the next year with the continued implementation of the new structure and numerous projects and initiatives aimed at improving customer service.

Lean Reviews

New lean reviews have been undertaken on former tenant arrears and the repairs interface. Over these reviews a new cohort of staff has been trained including colleagues from Corporate ICT. The service has improved implementation and monitoring arrangements for lean reviews and has received positive feedback from internal audit on both these and previous reviews. More reviews are planned within the service in 2013/14

Housing Options

During 2012/13 (April -March) the housing options service provided face to face housing advice and assistance to 823 households homeless or threatened with homelessness. 656 households were successful in either retaining their current accommodation or securing alternative housing. 167 households made a formal homeless presentation. Whilst the volume of cases as remained consistent this year the complexity of the cases has increased due to the economic climate.

A pilot project saw a council property being utilised as temporary homeless accommodation to ensure suitable accommodation available for homeless families with children.

The team focused on reducing the use of hostel accommodation for single people aged 16–34 years old

	<p>through another pilot a house share for three single young people.</p>
Community Based Accommodation Support Service	<p>2012/13 was a successful year for this service with the implementation of the Community Based Accommodation Support Service including the development of community hubs and remodelling the service to be a flexible and responsive service based on identified need and delivery through a support planning processes.</p>
Supporting People	<p>In August 2012, the Welsh Government merged the two Supporting People funding streams (SPG and SPRG) into one new Grant (SPPG), which is now managed directly by Local Authorities. The handover of the new grant and establishment of contracts with providers was managed smoothly and seamlessly, with no disruption to services provided.</p> <p>The team also launched the Learning 4 Life project with Us UnLtd. This provides education and training opportunities for young vulnerable people, who have previously failed within mainstream education.</p>
Improvements to Community Areas to Improve Communities	<p>The Housing Service, supported by funding from Tidy Towns, this year has been able to deliver a range of environmental improvements to the value of £25,000.</p> <p>The fund has supported Mold Spring Clean and the development of a community garden in Saltney. It has also helped deliver a range of planting projects in a range of housing complexes, local schools and communities.</p> <p>The Beechwood Road Community Garden Project has been developed by local residents in partnership with the Flintshire County Council Housing Service. The aim of the project was to transform an un-used area of land in Saltney and create an open green space for recreational use. The project has been welcomed by local parents who now have a safe environment for children to play in away from the busy road.</p>
Housing Renewal	<p>This year has been a successful year for the Housing Renewal Team who count the following amongst it successes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 71 Home Repair and Renovations completed for vulnerable households across the County utilising loan support to a total value of £400K.• Flintshire received 28% of the national Arbed monies made available during 2012/13 totalling some £1.2M• The Service successfully delivered the Houses into

Homes Scheme on behalf of the North Wales Council's, distributing funding of £2.3M

- Flintshire's performance in respect of returning empty homes back in to use was greatly improved with an outturn of 5.96% against target of 3%
- DFG performance continues to improve and the outturn for delivery of DFG's to adults was 385 days, against a target of 400 days.

**Private Sector Housing
Renewal Capital
Programme**




Due to the investment decisions made, the capital programme continues to perform strongly, despite the challenging economic climate faced. The Housing Renewal Service has been quick to capitalise on new funding streams being made available to ensure that the required match funding is in place. The outcome of this carefully planned approach is that an additional £1.3M was levered in to the capital programme in 2012/13 resulting in a total of £5.1M being expended on repairs, improvements and adaptations to private sector housing during the financial year. This figure is unprecedented in the recent past, probably since deregulation of the grant system in 2003 and demonstrates the levels of investment that can be achieved when core funding is made available.













2 Summaries

2.1 Improvement Plan

The following summarises progress in the areas of the authority's improvement plan undertaken by Housing Services.




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			New IT System now scheduled for 2013/14
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			The progress in this area has been stalled due to procuring a new contractor.
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			Dependent upon new Strategy
8.5 Develop a regional housing register and common allocations policy	TBC 2014			Subject to regional timetable









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 within acceptable range	6
	Target achieved or exceeded	4

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	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Target	Q4 Outturn	RAG	Change
HHA/002 Timeliness of discharging homelessness duty	215 days	152.2 days	215 days	232.65 days		Downturn see page 26
HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within 33 days.	90%	95.35%	90%	94.12%		Downturn
HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B	7 days	26.25 days	7 days	16.33 days		Improved see page 27
HHA/017A Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B	25 days	16 days	25 days	36.49 days		Downturn See page 28
HHA/017B Average number of days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation	280 days	421 days	280 days	339.78 days		Downturn See page 28




Housing Neighbourhood Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Target	Q4 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/006aL* Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation	97.50%	97.42%	97.50%	98.55%		Improved
HLS/012aL Current tenant rent arrears	3.00%	3.92%	3.0%	3.23%		Improved see page 20
HLS/013L* Percentage rent loss due to empty property	2.00%	1.96%	2.00%	1.90%		Improved
HLS/014L* Letting Times	42.00 days	46.25 days	42.00 days	48.47 days		Downturn see page 21
Housing Asset Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q3 Outturn	Q4 Target	Q4 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/10aL Emergency repairs	0.50 days	0.45 days	0.50 days	0.52 days		Downturn See page 23
HLS/10bL Urgent Repairs	8.50 days	7.99 days	8.50 days	9.80 days		Downturn See page 23
HLS/10cL* Non-urgent repairs	35.00 days	24.22 days	35.00 days	32.31 days		Improved
HPMM8L Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate	99.00%	98.72%	99.00%	98.32%		Downturn see page 24

2.3 Outturns Only Reported Annually



Community Support Services					
Indicator	Annual Target	2011/12 Outturn	2012/13 Outturn	RAG	Change
HHA/013 The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months	90%	85.52%	83.41%		Downturn see page 27
Housing Renewal (this indicator relates to section 8. of the Improvement Plan)					
Indicator	Annual Target	2011/12 Outturn	2012/13 Outturn	RAG	Change
PSR/004 Empty Homes	3.00%	1.25%	5.96%		Improved

2.4 Improvement Targets - Annual Outturns

The status of the improvement indicators are summarised for this year below:


RAG	Description	This Quarter
	Target missed	-
	Target missed but within acceptable range	4
	Target achieved or exceeded	1

Housing Asset Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)

Indicator	Annual Target	2011/12 Outturn	2012/13 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/10cL* Non-urgent repairs	35.00 days	61.15 days	43.58 days		Improved
Although we have not achieved the annual target this indicator, the outturn represents a considerable improvement on the outturn for 2011/12. The quarterly outturns show that for the last two quarters the targets has been exceeded. The change of management and increased focus on performance for this service area can be credited for improvement in this service area. Maintenance of the improved performance in this area is a priority for the service area.					
HPMM8L* Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate	99.00%	N/A	98.32%		N/A



Improvement in this area remains a priority. Problems with gaining access to properties in order to undertake the safety checks remains both a problem and priority to address. Weekly meeting between the repairs team and the neighbourhood management teams have now been set up to proactively address these issues, and senior managers are meeting monthly to look at further improvements in this area.

Housing Neighbourhood Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)

HLS/006aL* Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation	97.50%	95.51%	98.55%		Improved
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It is pleasing to see that despite the challenging economic climate that this area has seen much improvement this year and proves both the need and the achievements of the dedicated "Income Management Team.

APPENDIX 1

HLS/013L* Percentage rent loss due to empty property	2.00%	2.32%	2.01%		Improved
Although we have narrowly missed the annual target, the outturn represents a considerable improvement on the outturn for 2011/12. The quarterly outturns show that for the last two quarters the target has been achieved. Maintenance of the improved performance in this area remains a priority for the service area.					
HLS/014L* Letting Times	42.00 days	69.01 days	47.44 days		Improved See page 21
The outturn represents a considerable improvement on last year but is some way from the target of 42 days. Improved performance in this area remains a major priority for the service area and is subject to weekly meetings between the voids team and the neighbourhood management teams. Senior management along with the Performance Support Manager are meeting monthly to direct a programme of changes aimed at improving performance in this area.					












2.5 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:

- 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
CD08 Connah's Quay, Shotton And Queensferry Housing Renewal Area (Continuation of funding is a threat in this area)			↔	March 2020
CD12b Housing Management			↔	TBC
CD12c Housing Repairs And Maintenance Services			↔	April 2013
CD12e Sheltered Housing			↔	November 2013
CL04 Affordable Housing (This SARC has been refreshed see page 37)	N/A			April 2015
CD38 Welfare Reform (This is a corporate risk. Whilst work is progressing against the SARC and the Welfare Reform Strategy the certainty and forecasted severity of its impact dictates that this will continue to be shown as red for foreseeable future.)			↔	TBC

2.6 Service Plan

Progress has been made in all areas of the service plan this year. Over the last 3 months activity has been undertaken to review the service plan and prepare a new plan for 2013/14.

The new plan is planned for presentation at July Scrutiny Committee and supersedes the plan for 2012/13. Reporting against this plan will commence from Q1 2013/14.

3 People & Customer Indicators

3.1 Sickness & Absence

The quarterly and annual sickness outturns for each service area and the service as a whole are presented in the table below.

	Quarterly					Annual		
	Q4 11/12	Q1 12/13	Q2 12/13	Q3 12/13	Q4 12/13	2011/12	2012/13	Reduction
Community Support Services								
% Loss	9.83%	5.45%	4.90%	4.76%	4.11%			
Days lost per FTE	5.61	3.11	2.79	2.71	2.34	18.33	10.95	40.26%
Housing Asset Management								
% Loss	8.81%	5.68%	6.56%	8.56%	7.15%			
Days lost per FTE	5.02	3.24	3.74	4.88	4.07	15.37	15.93	-3.64%
Housing Renewal								
% Loss	7.97%	1.20%	1.19%	0.86%	2.77%			
Days lost per FTE	4.54	0.69	0.68	0.46	1.58	9.39	3.41	63.68%
Housing Strategy								
% Loss	3.51%	0.00%	0.70%	1.46%	0.00%			
Days lost per FTE	2.00	0.00	0.40	0.83	0.00	4.86	2.57	47.12%
Housing Management								
% Loss	9.20%	5.91%	4.82%	8.15%	2.41%			
Days lost per FTE	5.24	3.37	2.75	4.65	1.38	14.12	12.14	14.02%
Housing Services – Totals								
% Loss	8.90%	5.31%	5.51%	7.06%	5.37%			
Days lost per FTE	5.08	3.03	3.14	4.02	3.03	15.31	13.24	13.52%

It is pleasing to that a considerable improvement across our service areas and a significant improvement to the service when comparing the comparable quarter from last year and the annual outturn.

Community Support Services

Again this quarter the figures have continued to decrease. There has been a significant decrease 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 Warden Service.

Housing Asset Management

The figures have decreased this quarter and are better than the same quarter last year which is positive for the service. Management have continued to carry out all aspects of the Attendance at Work policy and Stage 1 Capability Hearings and Attendance Reviews have been ongoing in this service. The cases of long term absence have started to decrease and managers are encouraged to use the Return to Work Pathway to resolve the long term absence issues as effectively as possible at the earliest opportunity. The service review is in the implementation phase and coaching sessions have been arranged with new managers to ensure they understand their responsibilities in managing attendance within their teams.

Housing Renewal

The figures have increased this quarter however this is still a significant improvement on the same quarter last year.

Housing Strategy

There have been no absences for the team this quarter and it is pleasing to see a considerable improvement from last year's outturn.

Housing Management

This quarter has seen a decrease in absence rates with a significant decrease compared to this quarter last year. The decrease this quarter is due to a number of employees returning to work following long term absence.

Conclusion

Overall, there has been a decrease in absence rates this quarter and an improvement in attendance for the complete financial year (a reduction of 13.52%) when comparing 2012/2013 to 2011/12. Days lost for Housing Services (13.24 per FTE) however remains well above the corporate target of 9.8 days lost per FTE.

The Community Services Directorate are focussed on improving attendance at work and Heads of Service are being encouraged to set service and team targets to enable the Directorate to monitor performance. This performance information will be circulated across the Directorate to ensure that attendance remains high profile. Further coaching and support has been made available from HR and the policy and managers guide are available on the Infonet. Managers are being encouraged to follow the Return to Work Pathway process using the additional guidance documentation which has been developed to assist managers to bring employees back to work at the earliest opportunity.

3.2 Training & Appraisals

Training

The 12 months to 31st March, 2013 Housing Services staff undertook 983.25 days of training (compared to 748 days for the same period – 2011-2012). A 31.5% increase YTD.

Almost half of the training that has been undertaken this year refers to qualifications. This has been a big increase from last year, (471 days in comparison to 137 days for the same period in 2011/12 giving 244% increase.)

The current qualifications consist of the multiskilling development for trade operatives and higher education for a number of staff across the whole service. The percentage allocated to qualifications is projected to increase in the 2013/2014 financial year.

33.5% of the training was allocated to 'knowledge of the job' training in comparison to 63% in 2011/12.

The following qualifications are currently being undertaken across the service:

- FdSc Applied Computing
- BA (Hons) Advice Studies (Distance Learning)

- NVQ Level 3 - Management
- NVQ Level 3 - Business Administration
- NVQ Level 3 - Business Administration
- FdSc Housing Studies
- 2 x BSc (Hons) Housing Studies
- BA (Hons) Advice Studies (Distance Learning)
- FdSc Supported Housing
- 16 x Multi-tasking Maintenance Technical Certificate Level 2

Appraisals

The breakdown for each team is as follows:

Service Area	Complete	Due	Q3 %	Q4 %	
Senior Management Team	7	7	100%	100%	
NHM East	11	11	100%	100%	
NHM North	8	11	100%	73%	↓
NHM South	9	9	92%	100%	↑
Housing Asset Management	79	145	54%	54%	
Income Team	7	7	100%	100%	
Community Support Services	20	22	100%	91%	↓
CBASS (Warden Service)	42	42	100%	100%	
Supporting People	6	8	78%	75%	↓
Housing Renewal	14	17	81%	82%	↑
Housing Strategy	2	2	100%	100%	
Total	205	281	74%	73%	↓

The NHM North Team appraisals are pending appraisal training for the new Neighbourhood Housing Manager which is currently being planned.

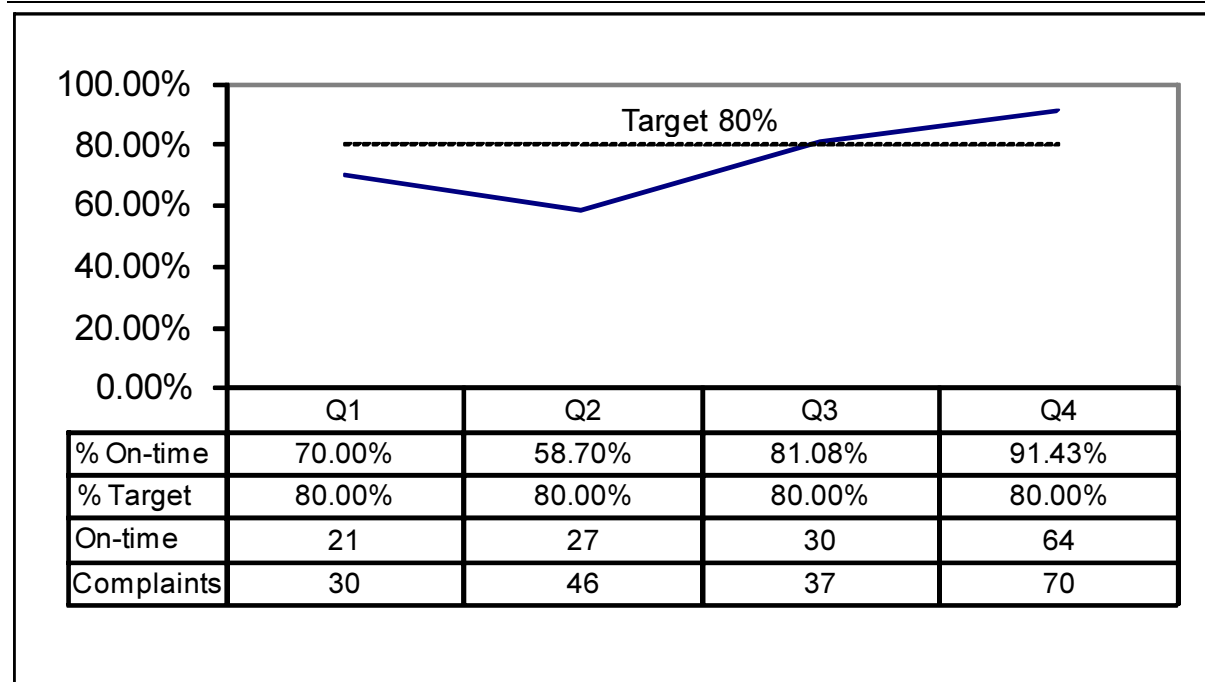
There are some outstanding appraisals across Community Support Services and Supporting People due to secondments and temporary changes in work assignments and reporting lines. These will be resolved during Q1 2013/14.

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.

3.3 Customer involvement

As reported in Quarter 3, the Housing Renewal Service is currently preparing to seek accreditation for the Customer Service Excellence Award. A pre-assessment was undertaken in this quarter and a very positive report was received about the preparatory work that had been carried out. The assessor felt that the Service would be in a position to go forward for the full assessment within a relatively short timescale. Due to assessor availability a date in July has been agreed for the assessment and the results will be reported in the Quarter 2 report. The Service remains on track to be the first Flintshire County Council service to be awarded the accreditation.

3.4 Complaints



It is pleasing to see significant increase in percentage of complaints being responded to within 10 days this quarter exceeding our target of 80%. Tenant engagement and satisfaction remains a priority of the service.

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

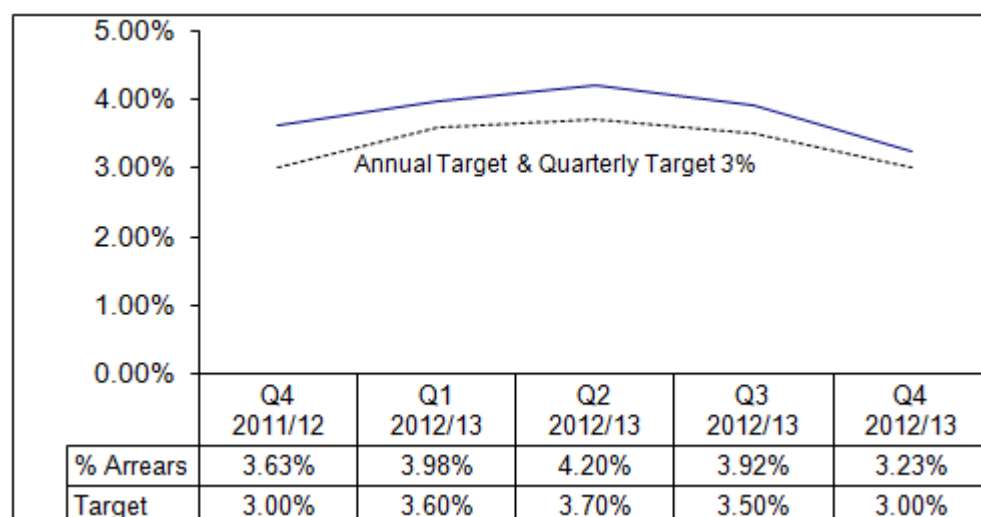


HLS/014

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 3.92% to 3.23%) we have not achieved the challenging target this quarter. However when compared to the comparable quarter last year (2011/12 Q4 3.63%) 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 52 position.

Arrears band £'s	Accounts in Arrears Q4 (Wk52) 11/12	Accounts in Arrears Q4 (Wk52) 12/13	Total Outstanding Q2 (Wk40) 11/12	Total Outstanding Q2 (Wk40) 12/13
0-300	1311	1,391	£119,216	£127,319.48
300-600	368	414	£159,966	£176,328.88
600-1000	228	242	£176,151	£183,665.51
1000-2000	220	202	£301,534	£282,711.27

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2000-3000	64	63	£153,489	£152,198.39
3000-4000	28	9	£94,438	£28,943.33
4000-5000	9	7	£39,815	£30,669.47
5000-6000	1	1	£5,760	£5,531.68
6000-7000	1	-	£6,011	-
Grand Total	2230	2329	£1,056,385	£987,368

The overall banding table shows that:

- The number of accounts under £1,000 has increased from 1907 to 2047 (140 accounts).
- The number of accounts over £1,000 has reduced from 323 to 282 (reduction 41 accounts).
- Overall rent arrears has reduced by £69,000

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:

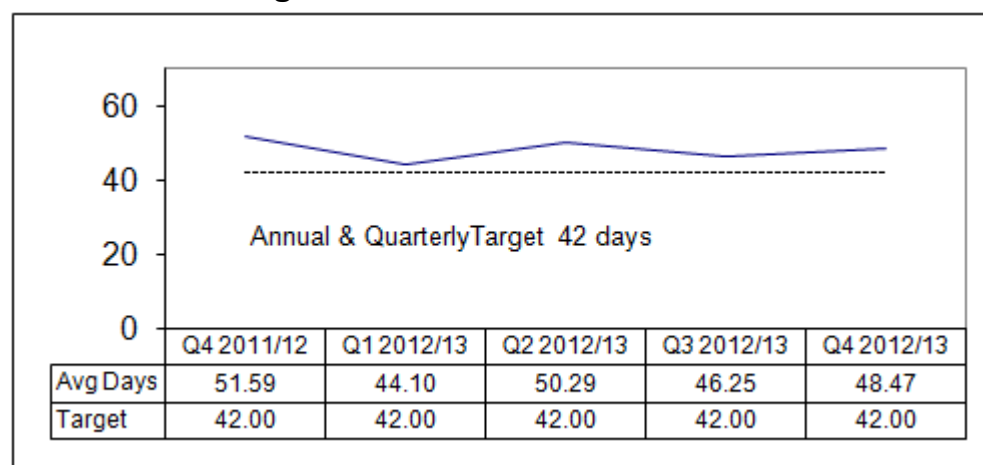
Debt collection of former tenant arrears

All recommendations from the lean review on "former tenant arrears" have now been implemented with the exception of outsourcing debt collection to the same agency working for Council Tax. This has been approved and will be implemented in May 2013 allowing the team to give a greater focus to current tenant arrears.

Financial awareness pilot project for arrears cases

Initial feedback from the attendees of the workshops have been more than positive and early indication is that it has been successful in both people seeking further support and engaging with the income team. A full analysis is currently taking place and a full report is due to go to the Senior Manager Team during May 2013 with recommendations on how the pilot can be taken forward.

HLS/014L Letting Times

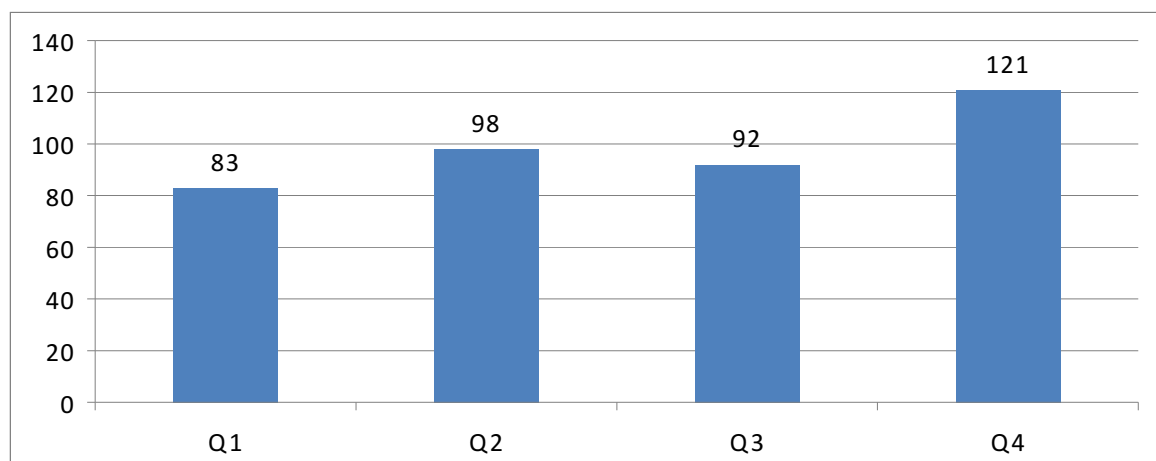


A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

It is disappointing to see a downturn in the performance indicator this quarter. The stage analysis is shown in the table below:

Period	Average Waiting Days	Average Work Days	Average Letting Days
Q1 2012/13	15	21	7
Q2 2012/13	14	21	10
Q3 2012/13	11	24	9
Q4 2012/13	17	28	7
Waiting Days	Average time from repairs receiving the keys to starting works		
Work Days	Average time between the start and completion of works		
Letting Days	Average time between the completion of works and the start of the new tenancy		

The number of voids completed in the quarter was 121 properties, the highest number since Q3 2010/11.



Weekly meetings are taking place between the housing management and voids teams to address day to day issues with void properties. Monthly performance reviews are also taking place with senior management and the Performance Support Manager to ensure that continuous improvement in this area is delivered.

These meetings have already identified that part of the problem in the turnaround times lies in the capacity of workforce and in planning of the works, improvements are being made in this area. Underpinning this will be the development of robust management reporting from our IT systems to inform planning and monitoring of works.

4.2 Service Plan Updates





Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area.

4.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

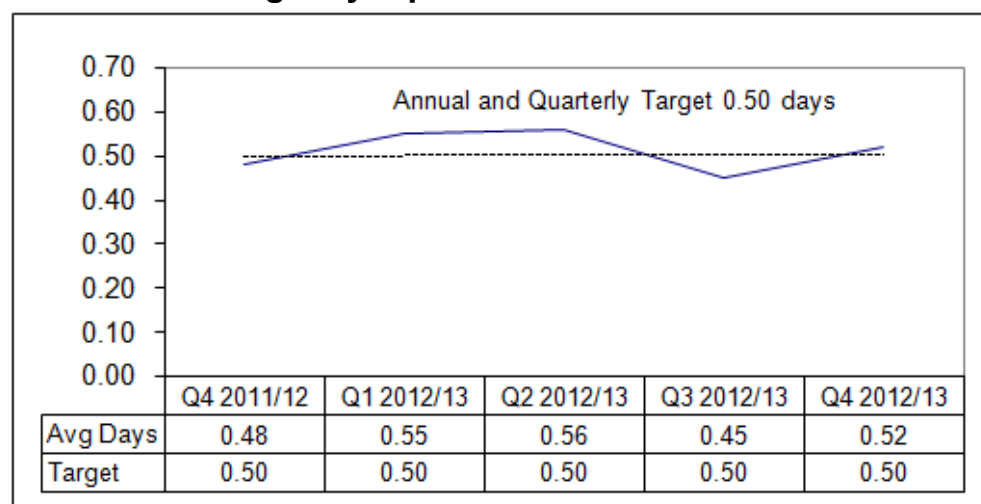
No reports for this section.

5 Housing Asset Maintenance

5.1 Performance Commentary

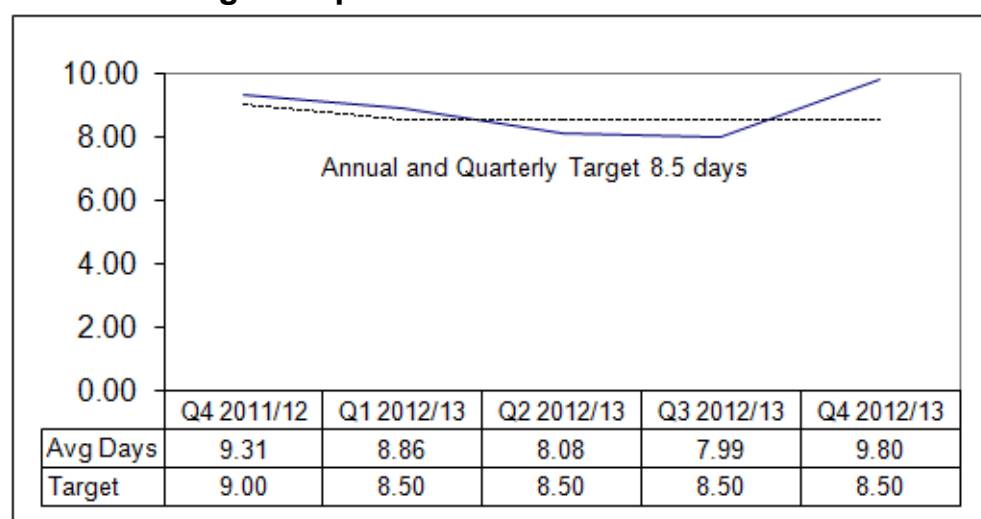
-  **HLS/10a**
Emergency repairs
-  **HLS/10b**
Non-urgent repairs
-  **HLS/10c**
Non-urgent repairs
-  **HPMM8**
Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate

HLS/10aL Emergency repairs



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

HLS/10bL Urgent repairs

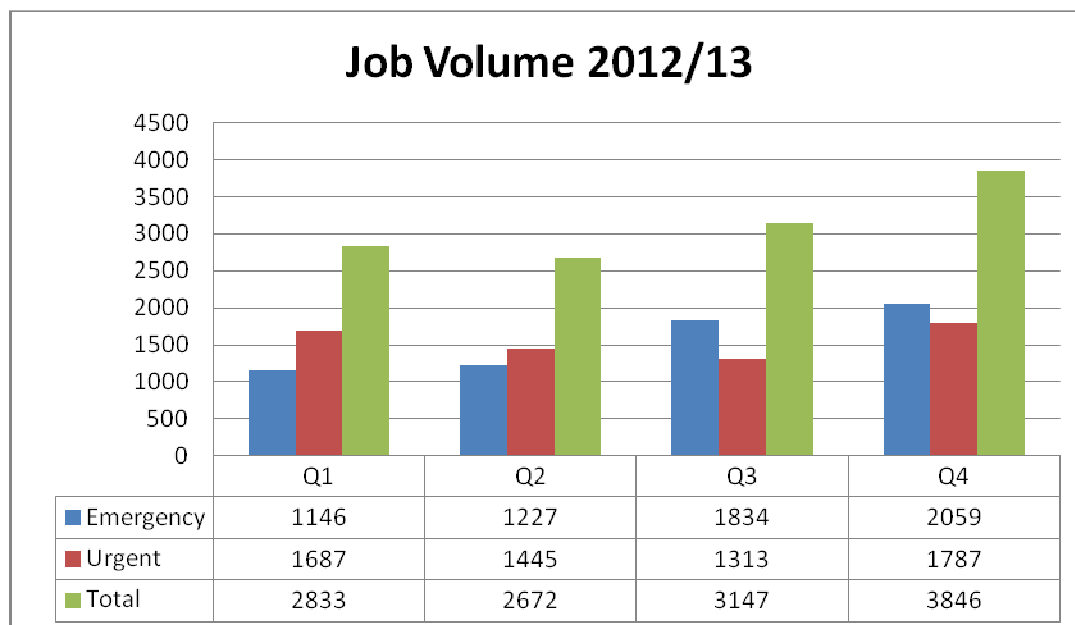


A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

It is pleasing to see that the non-urgent repairs category has exceeded its target again this quarter, however it is unfortunate to see that the bad weather has impacted on the

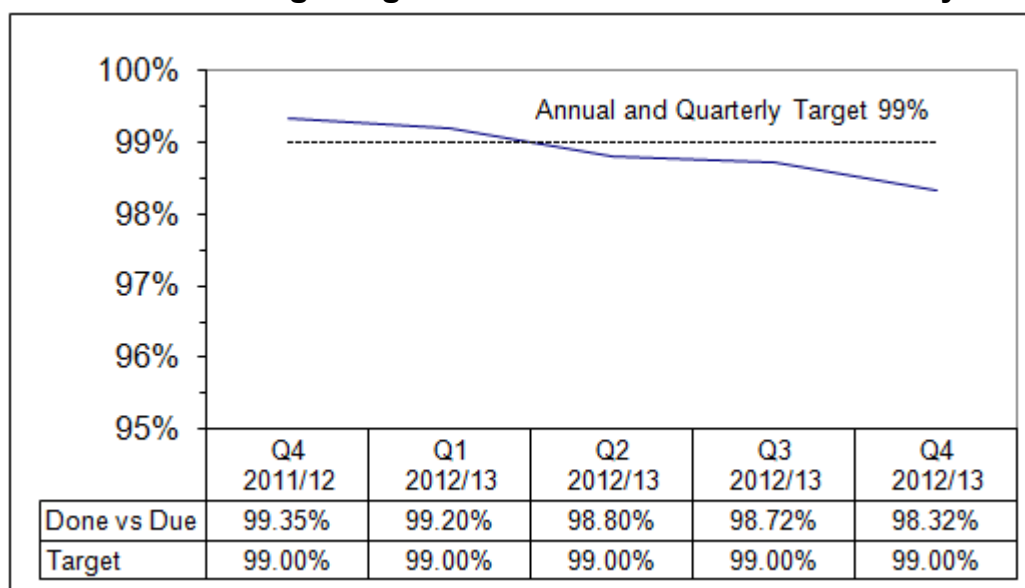
APPENDIX 1

outturns for the emergency repairs and urgent repairs this quarter. The increase of jobs in these categories is show below in comparison with earlier quarters for this year.



As a result resources needed diverting from both the gas and voids teams to assist with the increased volume of emergency and urgent repairs. The state of the roads also made it difficult to reach properties in need of repair which also impacted on ability to deal with emergency and urgent repairs within the target time. It is however important to realise as always in times of crisis our teams performed especially well maintaining a high level of professionalism and customer care despite the difficult conditions.

HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate



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

The gas technicians are still experiencing a high level of problems with gaining access to occupied properties, we are reviewing our procedures and seeking new ways to both engage and educate tenants on the importance of this. It is hoped that the extended hours of working soon to be rolled out will make this easier for our tenants who work. Weekly meetings between the gas teams and housing management teams, and

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monthly meetings at senior management level are ensuring that focus is maintained in resolving any issues in this area.

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

The following indicators have not achieved their targets.



HHA/002

Timeliness of discharging homelessness duty



HHA/013

The percentage of all potentially homelessness households for whom homelessness was prevented for 6 months



HHA/016

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



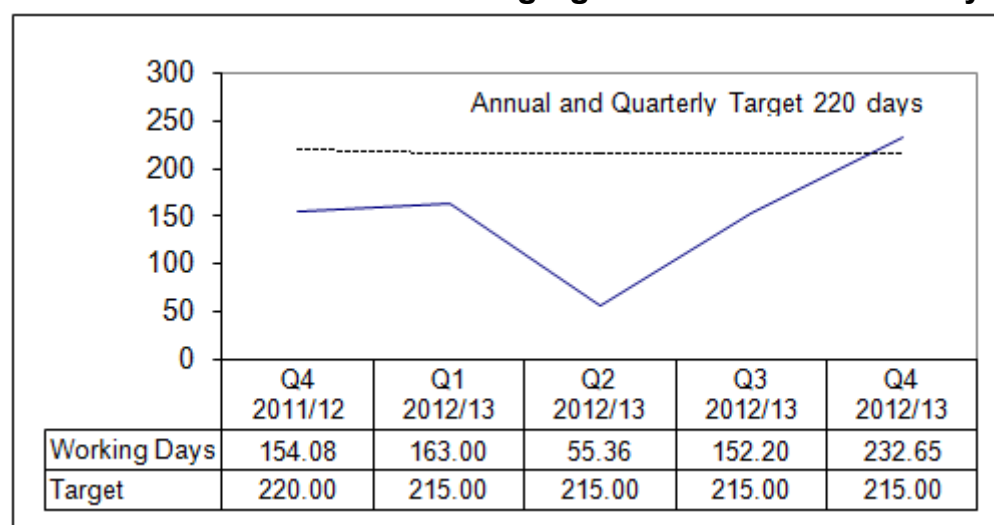
HHA/017A Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B



HHA/017b

Average days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation

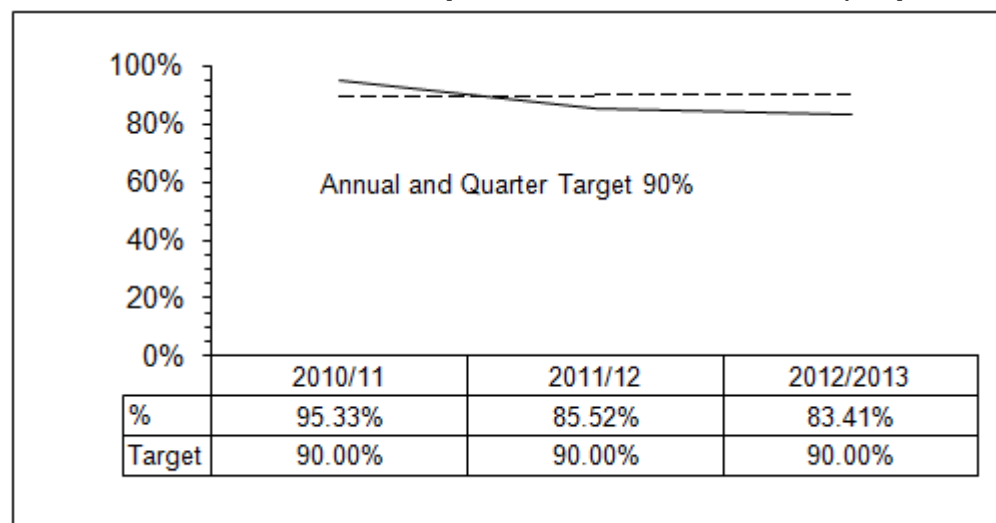
HHA/002 Timeliness of discharging full homelessness duty



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

This figure has increased during this quarter due to the local authority discharging its statutory homeless duty to 17 households. Two of these households had been accommodated over a 2 year period due to outstanding rent arrears, but following some intensive support work to address these rent arrears, the families were able to move on successfully into permanent accommodation via the housing register. Work is currently being undertaken by officers within the housing options service to visit all households accommodated in temporary accommodation to revisit their housing options and to assess their financial capabilities to ensure the housing options given are viable.

HHA/013 The percentage of all potentially homelessness households for whom homelessness was prevented for 6 months (Reported Annually)

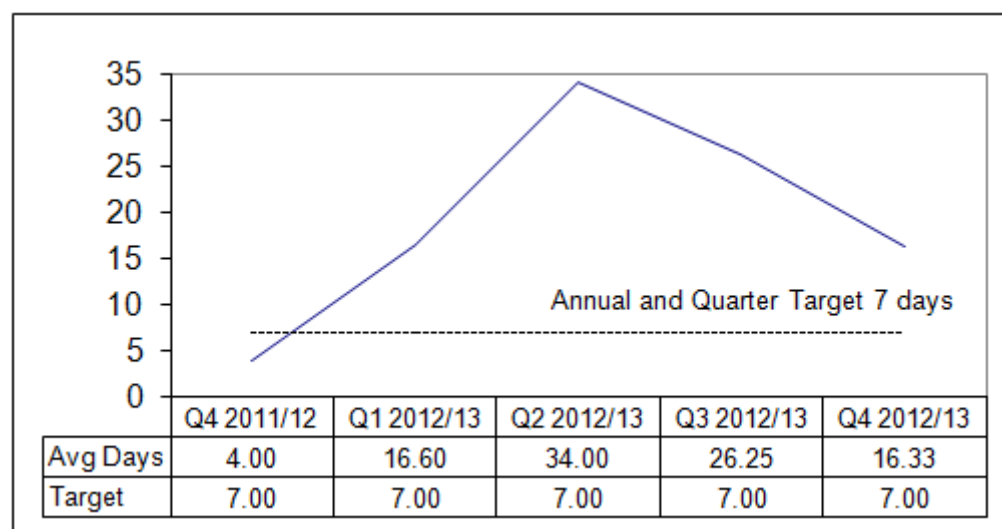


An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

This financial year the housing options service were successful in preventing 83.41% of the clients requesting housing assistance from accessing the homelessness route. By undertaking proactive and effective homeless prevention work the housing options team are minimising the financial pressures on the council through the fulfilment of its statutory homeless duties.

This figure has reduced slightly from the previous year; however, it is positive that a high level of successful homeless prevention work is being maintained within the current economic climate

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



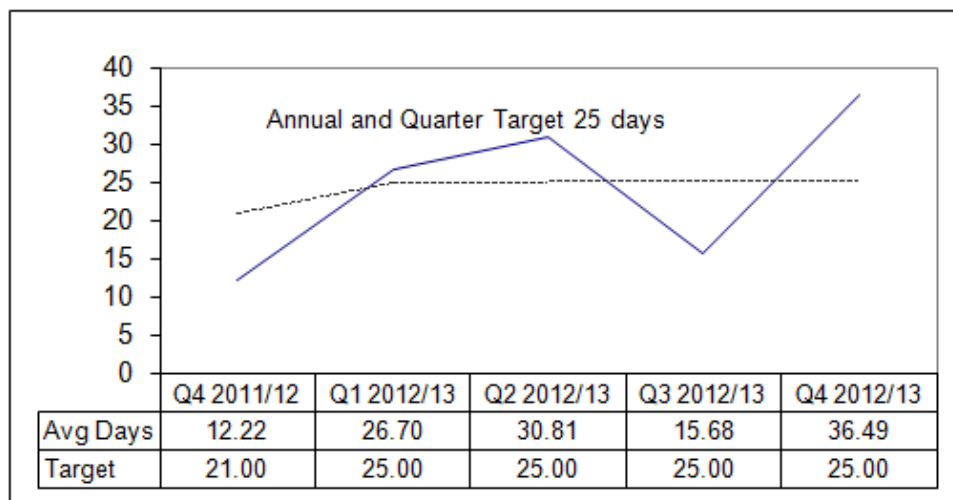
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

The local authority placed 9 households into B&B accommodation this quarter whilst enquiries were made into whether the local authority had a full statutory duty to secure permanent accommodation. Out of these only 3 households were owed a full duty. The reason the figure is above target is due to 2 families remaining in B&B for a substantial period. One reason was due to a request for a review on the suitability of a

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property offered and the second was a complex case. The service will identify alternative options for accommodating families where there are delays due to extensive enquiries or challenges.

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



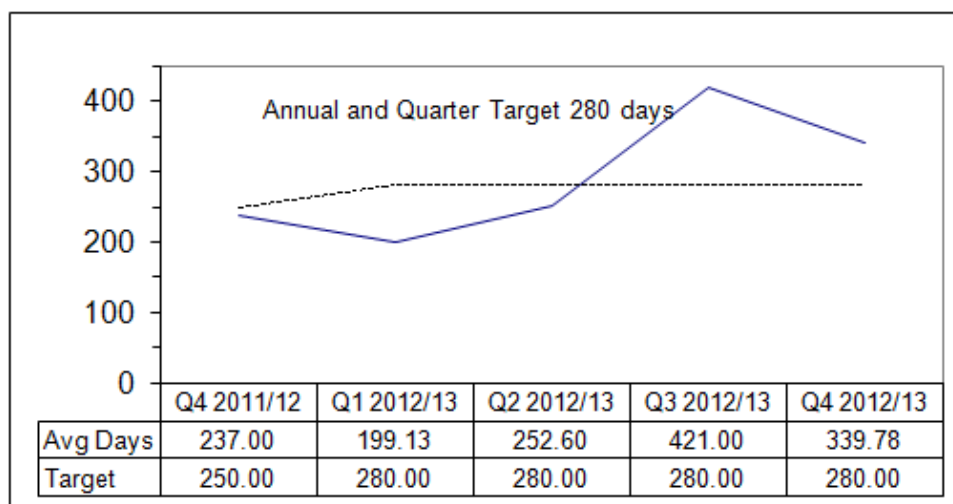
R

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

This quarter 47 homeless households in apparent priority need were accommodated in B&B, 37 of these were single people. Out of the 37 single people, the housing options service accepted a full homelessness duty to secure permanent accommodation for only 14, the other clients were assisted with effective prevention work to either assist the person to return to their former address or secure alternative accommodation in the private rented sector.

To ensure the local authority has a sufficient supply of suitable affordable accommodation for the future which meets the needs of single people, work is being undertaken to develop the private sector through the WLGA supported private rented sector improvement project.

HHA017b Average days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation



R

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

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This quarter there were 9 households who were successfully moved on from other forms of temporary accommodation. Seven households were secured social housing via the housing register, 2 households left their accommodation and found alternative housing.

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 £816,000. This figure comprises of £720,000 on-going annual payments and £96,000 one-off lump sum payments. It is pleasing to report that during the last financial year the welfare rights team has generated over £2.7 million in benefit payments for residents.
- In 2012/13 the team provided a casework service to 1,460 residents, which is fairly consistent with the 2011/12 figure (1,500) however, more residents were helped to challenge decisions on their entitlement to sickness benefits during this year (296 compared to 227 in 2011/12)
- Customer feedback received from residents who have been assisted by the caseworker service shows that 89% view the service received as excellent and 96% 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 continues to experience difficulties in meeting 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, this resource pressure will continue to intensify and residents needing specialist advice and representation may not be able to access the service.

Future

- There is a need to review the casework processes and referral systems, etc and develop and implement appropriate measures to ensure the effective and efficient use of current resources and align service delivery to support the aim of the FCC Welfare Reform Strategy, i.e., lessening the likelihood of residents experiencing homelessness and/or poverty.

7.2 Service Plan Updates

All service plan actions in this area are on-track.

8 Welfare Reform Mitigation Project

Work continues on a number of work streams to help mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform. Key activity during Q4 is listed below:

Supporting Under-Occupying FCC Social Housing Tenants

Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee supported all the recommendations within a report detailing proposed amendments to the housing allocations policy that are needed to meet the challenges created by the Welfare Reform Act 2012. This report as now been agreed by Cabinet (April 2013.)

There is a pilot underway to deliver money management workshops to FCC tenants experiencing difficulty in paying their contractual rent. Working with Deeside College and the Flintshire Learning Network to have skills developed at workshops, etc, recognised and credited towards tenants receiving a formal qualification.

Development Programme for Front Line Staff

Welfare Reform training and development programme for FCC staff is underway which will see the delivery of training courses to 106 front line staff over 7 separate sessions.

Establish Welfare Reform Response Team

Recruitment interviews have now been held and two appointments made. The role of these posts will be used to target those households most severely affected by the Welfare Reform. Welsh Government agreed to continue the Section 180 funding for the Welfare Reform Liaison Officer post during 2013/14.

Maximising efficiency of available service resources

The Flintshire Advice Management Board is being used in:

- Coordinating an update mapping exercise of social welfare advice provision
- Undertaking an options appraisal of Case Management systems to enable active referrals and reduce duplication of provision.

Work on Financial Inclusion Capability

The Flintshire Advice Management Board is in the process of developing a Money and Advice Strategy. The initial draft will be presented to the Flintshire Local Services Board in July 2013.

9 Community Based Accommodation Support (Wardens)

9.1 General Update

2012/13 was a successful year for this service which saw the implementation of the Community Based Accommodation Support Service including the development of community hubs which included the remodelling of the service to a flexible and responsive service based on identified need and delivery through a support planning processes.

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

9.2 Service Plans

The procurement of a suitable ICT system to provide monitoring and reporting of outcomes for this service area has been deferred to 2013/14 and is being considered along with requirements for new systems across Community Support Services.

10 Housing Renewal

10.1 General Update

The Housing Renewal area continues to build on the good work delivered during the last 2012/13.

Countywide Home Repair and Renovations

The Service continues to deliver home repair and renovation support across the County. During this quarter 23 people came forward requiring assistance. This is an increase of 8 from the previous quarter. Three property surveys were undertaken; which is in line with the previous quarter and scheduled work will now be taken forward for loan support. This fall in surveys is due to DFG's being prioritised, as no further new loans could 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 and the local supply chain.

Delivery of Disabled Adaptations

Performance in this area continues to be under close scrutiny, with the average number of days from referral to Housing Renewal to completion on site being 110 days, an increase of 14 days on the last quarter. During the reporting period 97 Disabled Facilities Grants were completed, at a value of £392,714. This area remains a priority for improvement.

Flintshire's first Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme

Flintshire was approached by Scottish Power in Q4, in partnership with a local contractor, A&M Insulations Ltd, with an offer to deliver solid wall insulation to at least 70 properties by August 2013. This will provide anticipated heating bill savings of £28,000 per annum at a cost to the Council of up to £220,000. The total value of the programme is in the region of £600,000. Surveys are underway with work anticipated to start on site in Q1 of 2013/14 within the former Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) Areas. This is one of the first ECO Schemes operating in Wales.

Additional Energy Efficiency Information

The Sealand Manor Gas In-fill project continues on track with completion expected in May 2013. This quarter 14 properties have received gas connections with anticipated heating bill savings of £8,000 per annum.

Eco Centre Wales entered voluntary liquidation in Q4 due to a lack of grant funding streams being secured. However, Flintshire's Housing Renewal Service worked with the members of staff in the Mold Eco Centre team to help develop a new social enterprise and ensure that five of the six jobs were safeguarded. The newly established North Wales Energy Advice Centre retains the 0800 954 0658 freephone advice line and retains all of the previous delivery capabilities, including importantly, their impartiality from any energy company that so many of their counterparts have had to relinquish in order to remain afloat.

The period of transition between UK Government funding streams has led to several months of little support for homeowners towards installing energy efficiency measures. In addition to vulnerable residents, those to suffer most at these times are the small or

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medium sized businesses operating in the sector. In a move to support them Housing Renewal has provided a subsidy programme to encourage homeowners to continue to have these works completed. With Welsh Government support this unique scheme provided £250 grants towards loft or cavity wall insulation and £500 towards boiler replacements. Flintshire Care and Repair also contributed with the allocation of Affordable Warmth funding in eligible cases, of up to 50% of the total cost. 20 boilers were installed in Q4 although installation of lofts and cavities were not in demand. Anticipated annual heating bill savings = £4,500. Four SMEs have benefited so far. This work will continue until such time as the market picks up.

North East Wales Energy Company Obligation framework procurement

Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy have entered a partnership arrangement to procure a framework of contractors to undertake large scale ECO projects. ECO is the successor programme to the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) from which Flintshire greatly benefited. The contract is for the funding and delivery of the full list of ECO eligible measures (solid wall insulation, G rated boiler replacement, heating system upgrades etc). The target is to maximise the level of external funding brought in to the region by using volume as an incentive. This will assist with attainment of WHQS in our housing stock, as reducing the cost of the heating programme potentially releases funding for other measures. The framework will be live from August 2013.

Roll out of UNO energy profiling software began in Quarter 4. The Council needs to know more about the housing stock across the county if it is to efficiently direct resources to affordable warmth schemes. UNO allows Housing Renewal to do just that. Work is underway to collate and review as much of the available housing data as possible for all tenures including, council owned, owner occupied and private rented. This will allow for an energy map to be prepared, which will identify areas of required investment.

Delivery of the Connah's Quay, Shotton & Queensferry Renewal Area

The Housing Renewal Service continues to prepare for the delivery of Phase 2 of the group repair scheme. To date 130 of the 177 eligible properties have been surveyed, an increase of 10 from the last Quarter. The Phasing of the work is being reviewed in light of reductions to both the specific capital grant and the Council's match funding. The expectation is that the scheme will now be delivered over the period 2013/15, as opposed to being completed within this financial year, as previously proposed.

The partnership with Groundwork (an environmental works social enterprise) around the delivery of small scale environmental improvements was completed in Quarter 4. The types of work that were being undertaken included planting schemes, rubbish clearing, restoration of benches and planters and the painting of railings. Volunteer hours fell to approximately 80 per month. This was a fall of approximately 20 hours per month from the previous Quarter. A review of this project is being undertaken before a decision is taken as to whether it should be continued.

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.

Flintshire Housing Renewal continues to lead the North Wales Region and during Quarter 4 claimed the remaining resources available to the total of £2,332,532. Flintshire's share of this resource is £540,000, which is the highest claim across the region to date. This will provide loans for 23 units of accommodation across the County. Again, detailed information has proved vital in securing these resources.

Flintshire now has an application waiting list totalling £560K, which would provide loans for a further 21 units of accommodation. The new Minister for Housing and Regeneration is currently considering whether further resources will be made available in 2013/14.

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 this year we have exceeded that target with a final outturn of 33 properties, this equates to 5.96%. On this basis a more challenging target of 6% will be set for returning empty homes in to use during the 2013/14 financial year.

Customer Service Excellence

As reported in Quarter 3, the Housing Renewal Service is currently preparing to seek accreditation for the Customer Service Excellence Award. A pre-assessment was undertaken in this quarter and a very positive report was received about the preparatory work that had been carried out. The assessor felt that the Service would be in a position to go forward for the full assessment within a relatively short timescale. Due to assessor availability a date in July has been agreed for the assessment and the results will be reported in the Quarter 2 report. The Service remains on track to be the first Flintshire County Council service to be awarded the accreditation.

10.2 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 2013/14, 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.

10.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

11 Housing Strategy

11.1 General Update

The following are brief updates on the Housing Strategy Team's activities this quarter:

Gypsy-Traveller Strategy

The development of a Flintshire Gypsy Traveller Strategy had been delayed due to delays in finalising the regional Gypsy Traveller Needs Assessment. The findings of the North Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment were endorsed by Cabinet in January 2013.

Affordable Housing

Continued progress has been made in enabling the provision of affordable and market homes in many of Flintshire's communities.

During 2011-2012, 71 new homes were provided, including 18 homes at Treuddyn as part of a mixed tenure development.

In addition 42 homes were provided across the communities of Buckley, Mold, Kinnerton, Northop Park, Penyffordd and Drury. These homes were made available through the Flintshire shared equity model, opening up sustainable, affordable ownership to Flintshire residents. A further 7 homes for the intermediate rental market have been provided through the Welsh Housing Partnership by Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd.

An ambitious programme has been set for 2013-2014 with a target of 128 new homes to be provided. Forty homes will be provided for social rent by Registered Social Landlords through Social Housing Grant funding. Affordable homes on private developments in Connah's Quay, Kinnerton, Penyffordd, Hope and White Lion will be provided, 74 will be shared equity and a further 12 which will be properties gifted to the council.

Customer Involvement

Engagement with elected members comprised a key part of the Housing Strategy Team's programme for 2012-2013 and further sessions are planned for 2013-2014. Emphasis on customer involvement for 2013-2014 will be focused upon promotion of the council's strategic housing activities and ensuring improvements in the information published on the web and, where appropriate in print.

Service Plan Updates

Progress is being made in line with the revised service plan in this area.

Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)

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

CL04 – Affordable Housing

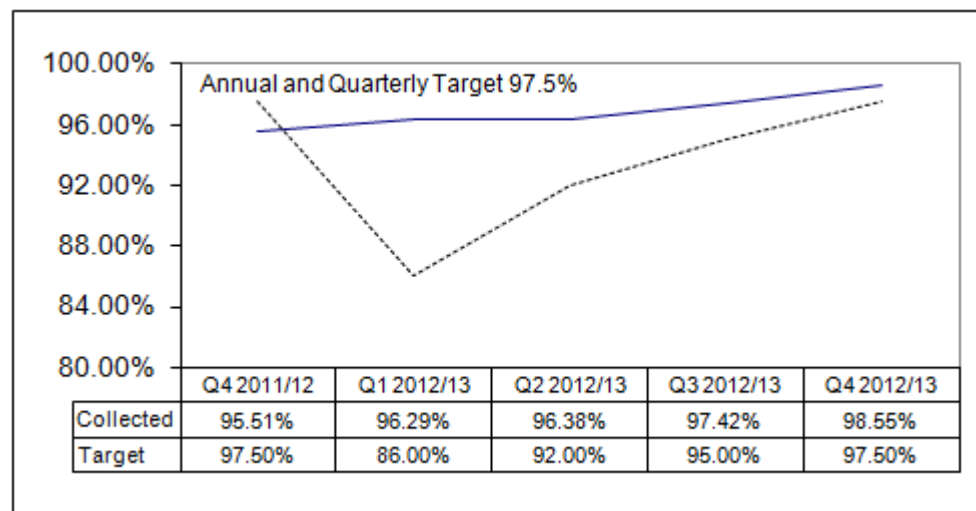
The opportunity to refresh this SARC as been taken. The SARC now presents the risk as a failure to ensure a sufficient supply of affordable housing. Actions to mitigate the risk through adopting effective partnerships with key stakeholders and adopting a range of approaches are now reflected with the SARC.

Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

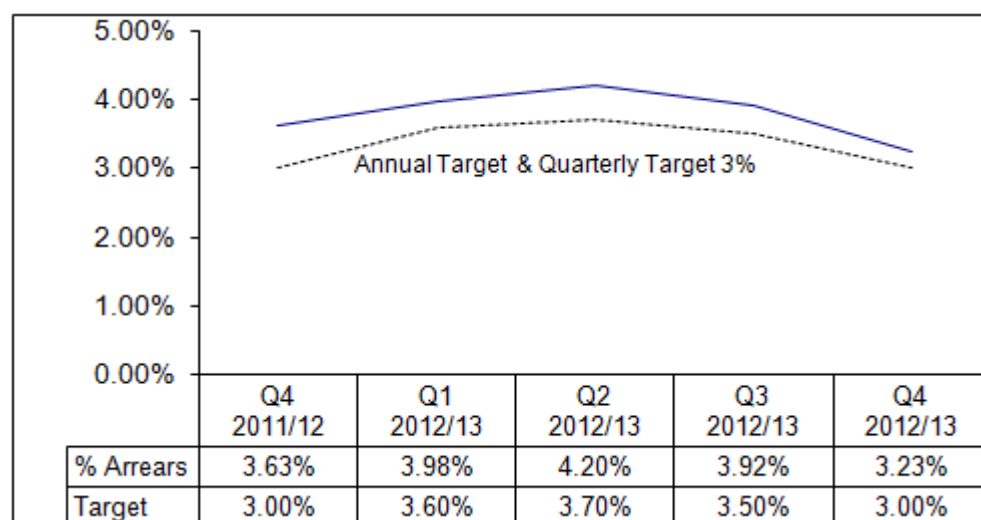
Appendix A – Quarterly Performance Graphs

HLS/006aL Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



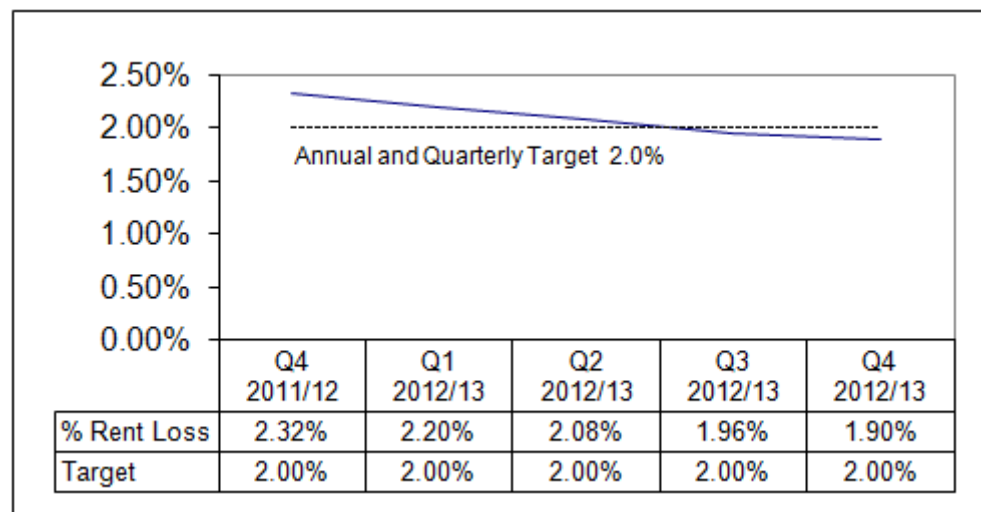
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/012aL Current tenant rent arrears



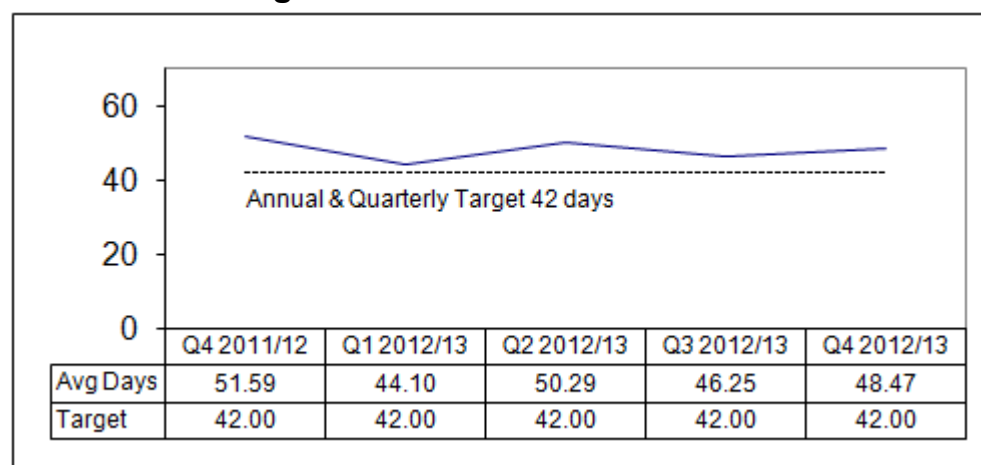
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/013L Percentage rent loss due to empty property



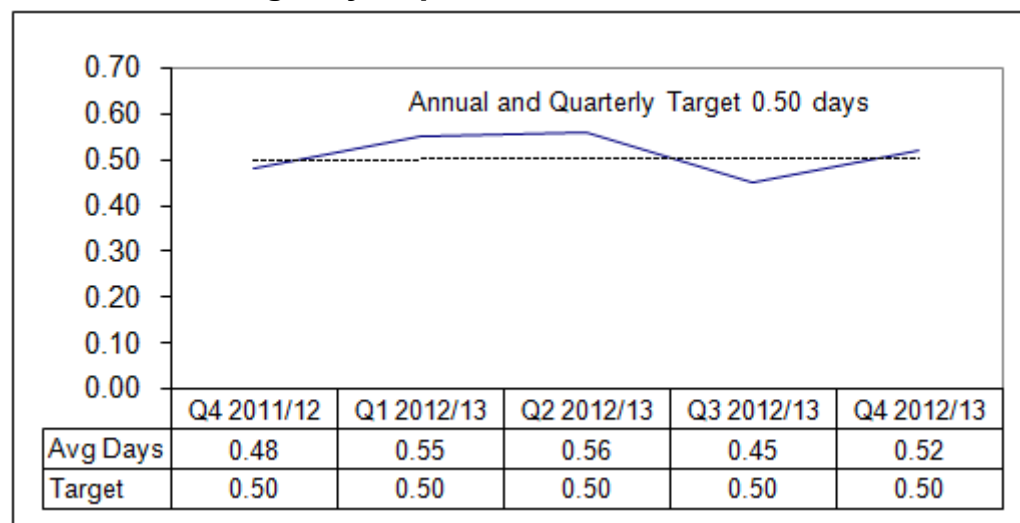
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/014L Letting Times



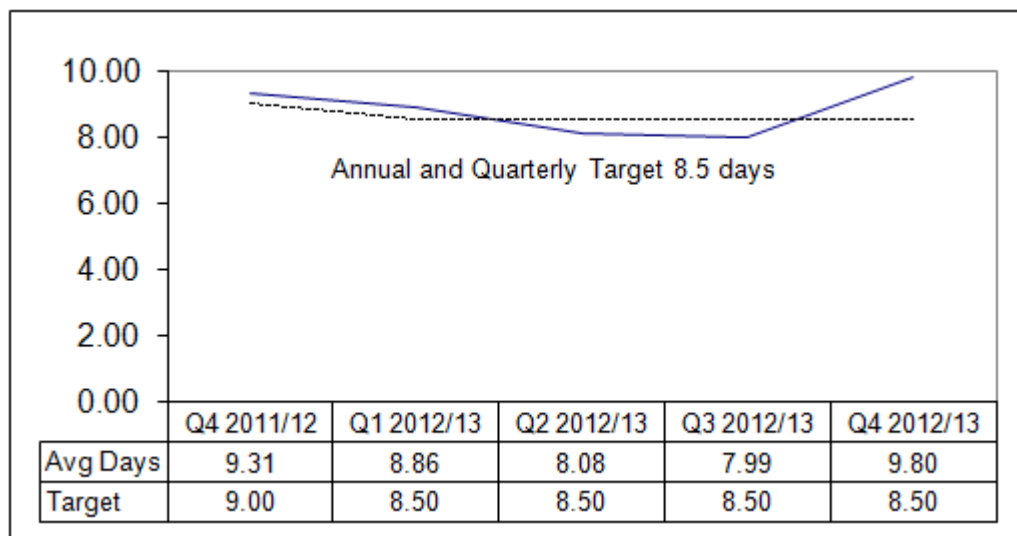
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10aL Emergency Repairs



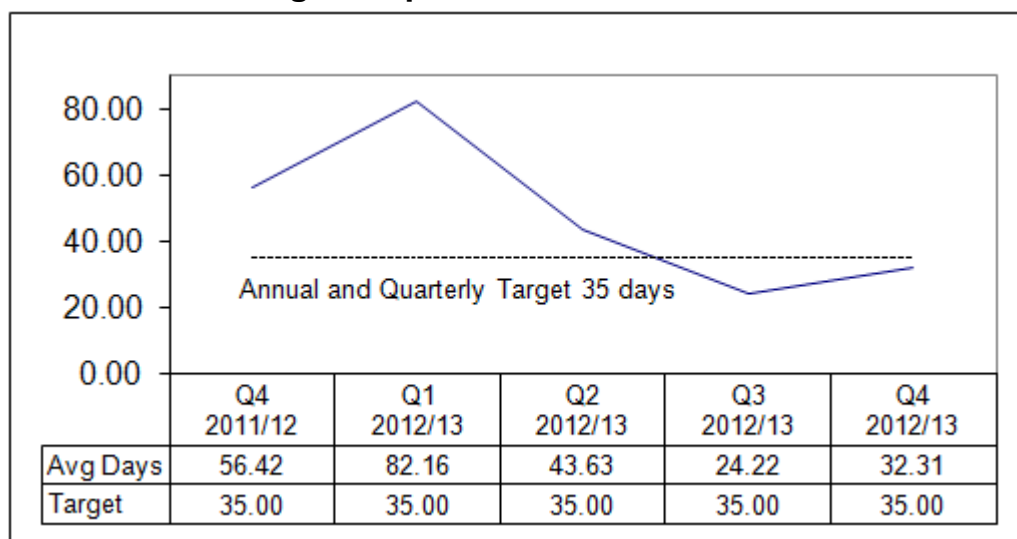
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10bL Urgent Repairs



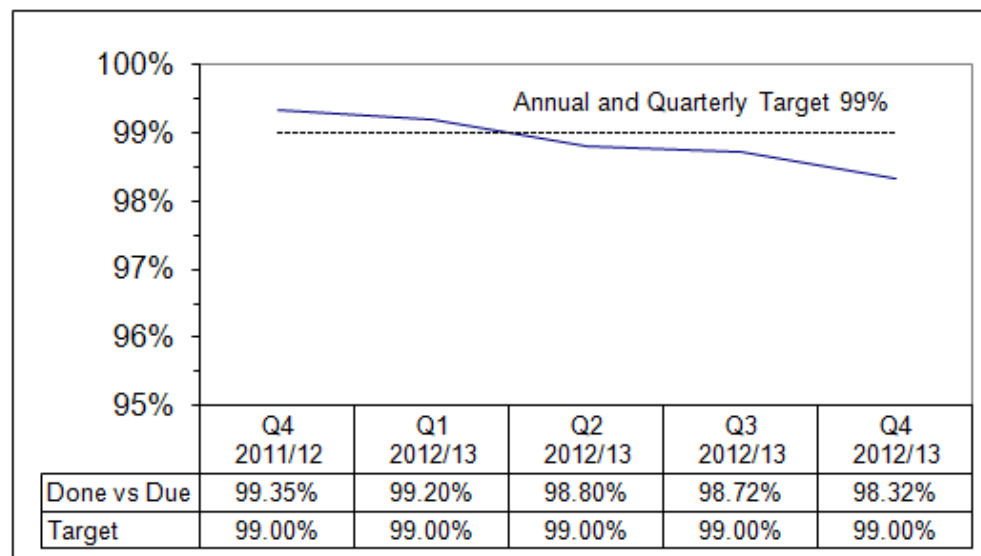
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10cL Non-urgent repairs



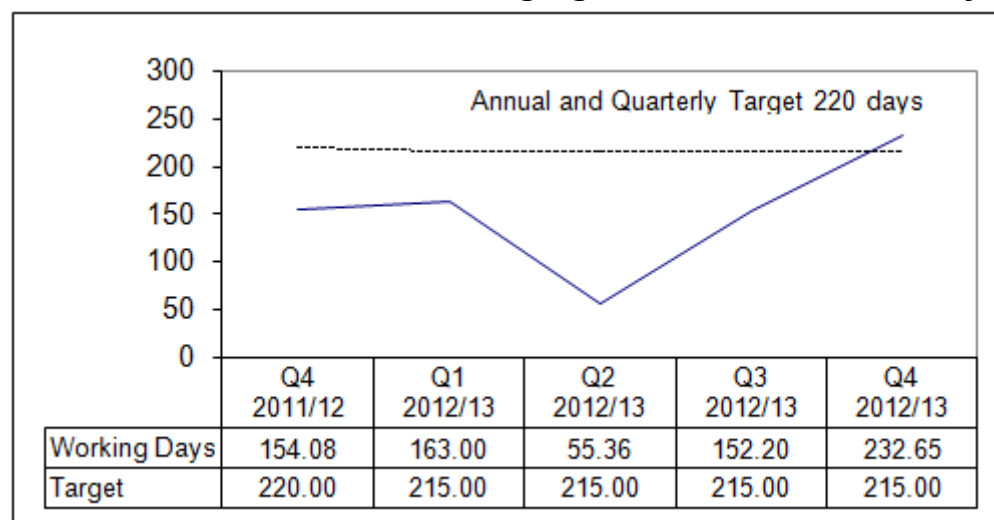
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HPMM8L Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate



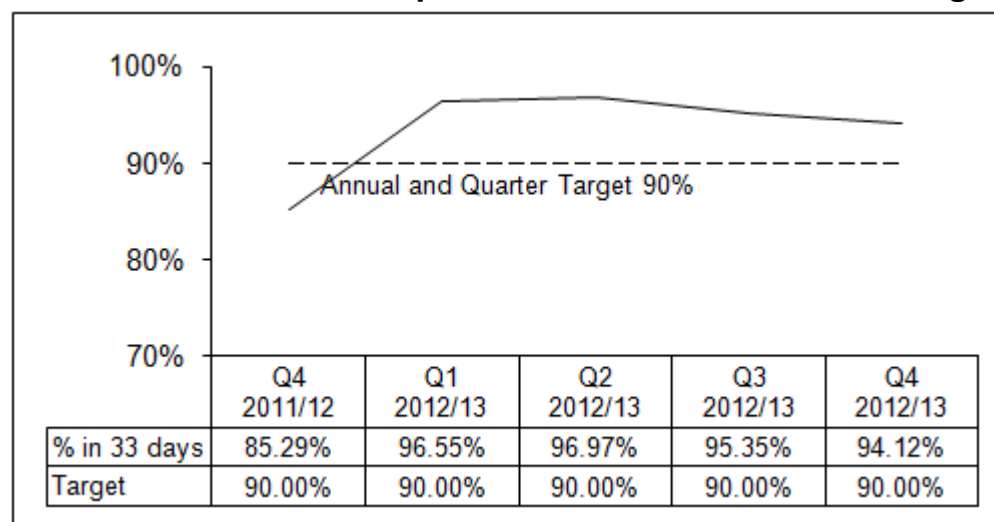
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/002 Timeliness of discharging full homelessness duty



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

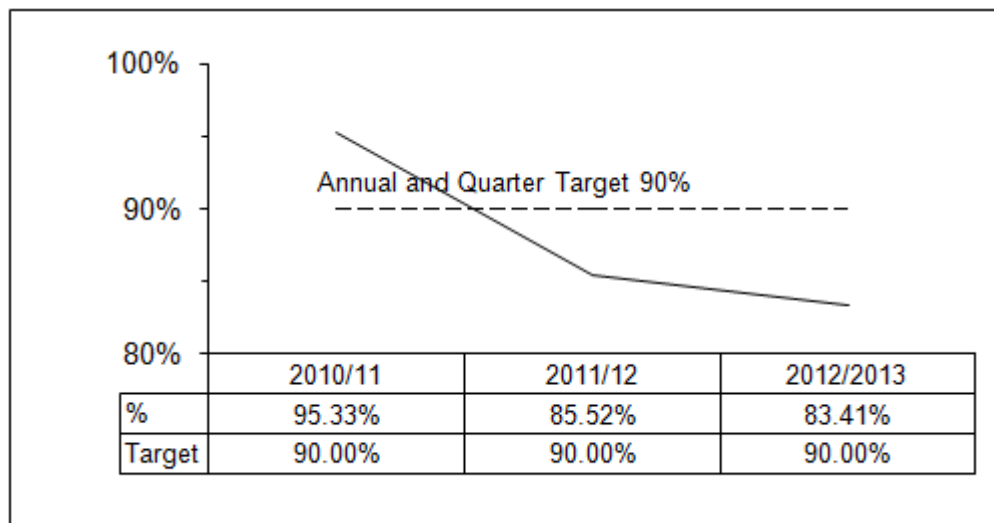
HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within target



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

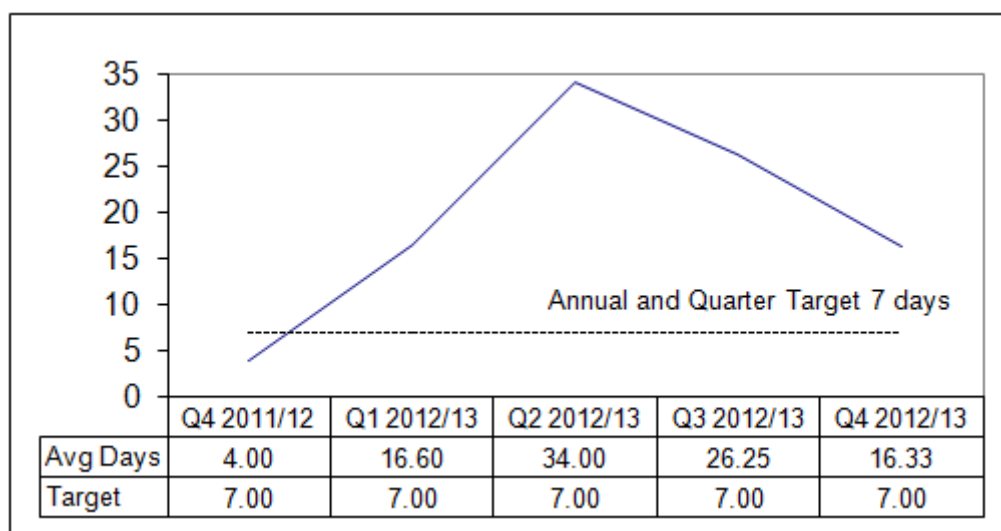
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HHA/013 The percentage of all potentially homelessness households for whom homelessness was prevented for 6 months (Reported Annually)



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

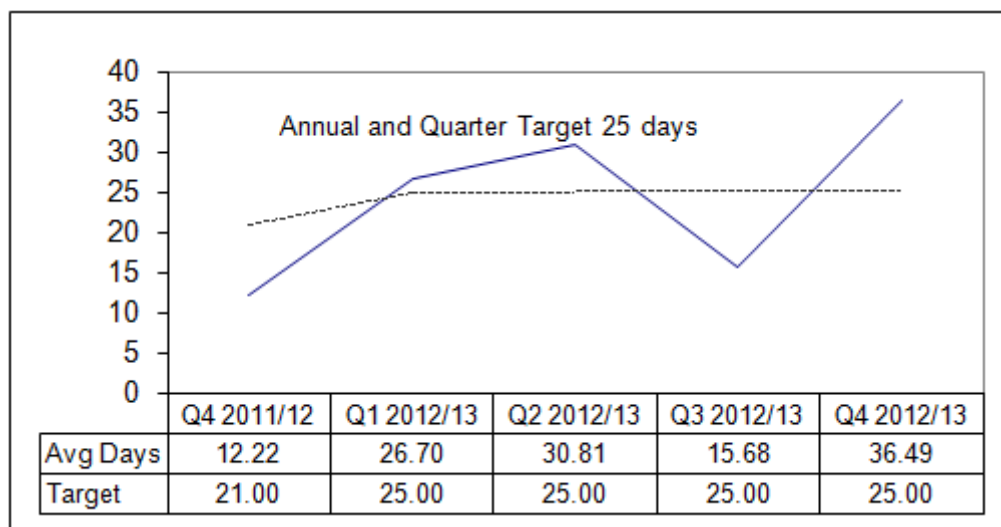
HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B accommodation



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

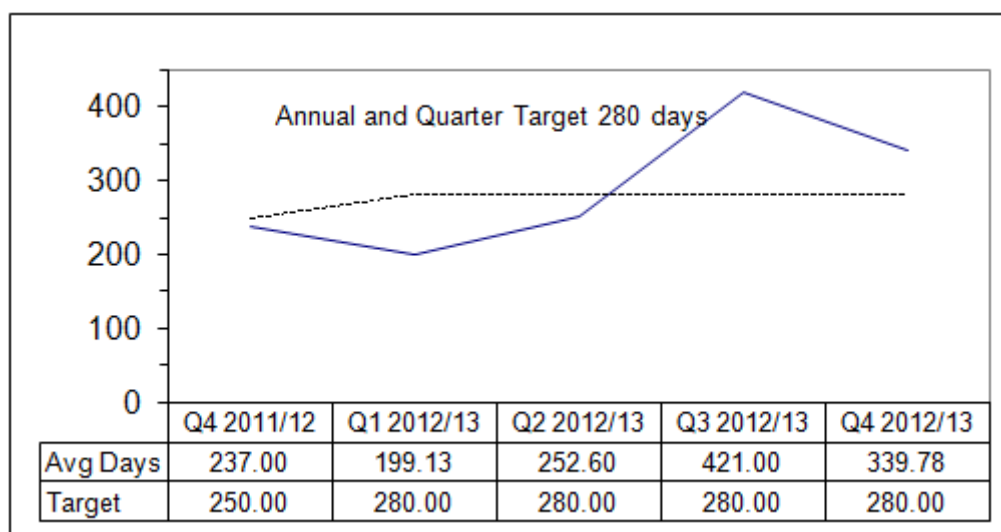
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HHA/017a Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B accommodation



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.

Appendix B - Photos for Tidy Towns



Tidy Towns has funded new railings to enclose the Dragon Beacon, it is now protected from vandalism and litter.

Jane Parry from Sealand Primary School brought 8 of the pupils down to do some planting.





Beechwood road stage 1



Beechwood road stage 2



Beechwood road stage 2