

Quarterly Performance Report – Housing Services

Report Author Head of Housing Services
Report Date 6 August 2012
Report Period Quarter 1: 1 April 2012 to 30 June 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
- Outcome Agreement
- 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
30/07/12	Draft report for review by Head of Service.	Simon Abbott
02/07/12	Amendments requested by Head of Service	Simon Abbott
03/08/12	Amendments for approval by Director	Simon Abbott
08/08/12	Amendments for approval by Director/HOS	Sue Dolman
09/08/12	Final version for submission to Corporate	Simon Abbott
16/08/12	Commentary to CD14 added	David Humphreys
28/08/12	Acceptance revisions for Corporate	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:

Voids

The outturn for letting of void properties has again significantly improved again this quarter. The average turnaround time of 44.1 days represents an improvement of 7.5 days from that reported in Q4. Since starting the implementation of the lean review on voids the turnaround time has been reduced by a staggering 110 days. Credit must be given to the Housing Lean Team, Voids Team and Neighbourhood Management Teams for their hard work in making this happen.

Gas Servicing

We are pleased to report that we have again achieved our target in this area. Success can be attributed to the introduction of an 11 month servicing programme. All gas appliances are scheduled for servicing one month before the expiry of their gas safety certificate. This means that any tenants not allowing access to the properties can be taken through stringent no access procedures to ensure appliances can be serviced before the expiry of certification.

Homelessness

Despite the ever increasing pressure on the service the team are still managing to perform well in most areas

Our commitment to securing alternative temporary accommodation to keep our use of bed and breakfast to a minimum can be demonstrated by comparing our use of bed and breakfast to that of other neighbouring authorities.

In order to minimise the levels of use of bed and breakfast we will need to actively progress the re-designation of some of our existing stock as well as continuing to develop good relationships with our private sector landlords.

Welfare Reform

Work continues on a collaborative project with Denbighshire and Wrexham, using Welsh Government funding for three posts to help mitigate the effect of Welfare Reform. This project has recently being audited by Shelter on behalf of the Welsh Government. Whilst we are waiting for the official outcomes of the audit, early indications show that the auditors were impressed with the breadth and quality of work being undertaken and aim to cite areas of the project as best practice. Their final report will consider other projects funded across Wales. Ours was selected for the audit sample as it is the only funded project that is collaborative.

Rent Collected

Performance in the first quarter has been disappointing but can be attributed to a larger than expected carry over of former tenant arrears and current tenant arrears at year end. In addition direct debit payments for quarter 1 were credited to rent accounts in week 14 just after the end of the quarter. This will continue to be an area focus and we are confident that performance will improve as year progresses.

Non Urgent Repairs




Work to address the backlog of repairs will be complete in August but this has caused a dip in the performance this quarter as many of the very old tickets have been actioned. A significant improvement will be reported from quarter 3.













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			Dependent on the Local Housing Strategy which is now expected for completion September 2012
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	2
	Target missed but with in acceptable range	6
	Target achieved or succeeded	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	Q4 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	RAG	Change
HHA/002 Timelessness of discharging homelessness duty	220 days	154.08 days	220 days	163 days		Downturn
HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within 33 days.	90%	85.29%	90%	96.55%		Improved
HHA/016* Average number of days families with children spent in B&B	7	4	7	16.6 days		Downturn see page 25
HHA/017A Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B	25 days	12.22	25 days	26.70 days		Downturn see page 25
HHA/017B Average number of days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation	280 days	237 days	280 days	199.13		Improved

Housing Neighbourhood Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q4 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/006a* Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation	97.50%	95.51%	86.00%	96.29%		Improved see page 16
HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears	3.00%	3.63%	3.60%	3.98%		Downturn see page 16
HLS/013* Percentage rent loss due to empty property	2.00%	2.32%	2.00%	2.20%		Improved see page 19
HLS/014* Letting Times	42.00 days	51.59 days	42.00 days	44.10 days		Improved see page 20
Housing Asset Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q4 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/10a Emergency repairs	0.50 days	0.48 days	0.50 days	0.55 days		Downturn see page 22
HLS/10b Urgent Repairs	8.50 days	9.31 days	8.50 days	8.87 days		Improved see page 22
HLS/10c* Non-urgent repairs	35.00 days	56.42 days	35.00 days	82.16 days		Downturn see page 23
HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate	99.00%	99.35%	99.00%	99.20%		Maintained

















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
 R	High Risk
 A	Medium Risk
 G	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
CL04 Affordable Housing			September 2012
CD08 Connah's Quay, Shotton And Queensferry Housing Renewal Area			March 2020
CD12a Housing Strategy (see page 32)			TBC
CD12b Housing Management			TBC
CD12c Housing Repairs And Maintenance Services			April 2013
CD12d Homelessness			TBC
CD12e Sheltered Housing			November 2013
CD14 Housing Ballot			Achieved March 2012

<p>CD26 Disabled Facilities Grants</p>			<p>March 2013</p>
<p>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.)</p>			<p>TBC</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	✓	
2b Maximisation of Rental Income	✓	
2c Best use of Housing Stock	✓	
2d Regional Housing Register	✓	
2e Customer Involvement in Neighbourhood Management	✓	
Housing Asset Maintenance		
3a Implement Staff Restructure	x	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	x	See page 27
4c Service Review	✓	
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	✓	
6c Performance Support	✓	
6d Business Systems	✓	
6e Customer Involvement in Housing Strategy	✓	

3 People & Customer Indicators

3.1 Sickness & Absence

Community Services Directorate

Within the Community Services Directorate, levels of absence have decreased overall in Quarter 1 to 7.23% in comparison to 7.51% reported in Quarter 4 for period 2011 / 12 into 2012 / 13.

The absence rate for the Directorate has increased slightly when compared with the same period last year. This equates to 3.02 days lost per FTE in 2011/12 compared to 4.12 days lost per FTE at the start of this financial year. The target for the Council has been revised to 9.8 days per FTE and if the trend continues for this financial year the Community Services Directorate is projected to reach 16.48 days lost per FTE which far exceeds the target.

The Community Services Directorate Management Team continues to carry out the actions identified in the Attendance Management Strategy. This includes monitoring attendance on a quarterly basis at DMT and identifying areas where Departmental Attendance reviews are to be conducted. Further work will be carried out within the Directorate to further raise the profile of Attendance Management and the impact of absence on both services and staff who attend work on a regular basis.

Housing Services

When reviewing absence levels by service, levels of absence have decreased in Housing to 5.16% Quarter 1 from 8.90% in Quarter 4. When compared to Quarter 1 absence rates for 2011/12 there has been an increase from 3.98% to 5.16% in 2012/13. This equates to 2.94 days lost per FTE at the end of this period. If this trend continues Housing Services are projected to reach 11.78 days lost per FTE which is above the Council target.

Community Support Services have the highest levels of absence per FTE in Quarter 1 at 3.84 days lost followed by Housing Management at 3.29 days and then Housing Asset Management at 2.81 days lost per FTE.

A number of long term absences resulted in an increase in Quarter 4 across Housing services. These absences have been reviewed and this has had a positive impact on the absence levels in Quarter 1.

The 100% attendance pilot in Housing is continuing and will be reviewed again at year end 2012/13.

3.2 Training & Appraisals

In the 3 months to 30 June 2012 Housing Services staff undertook 248 days of training (compared to 208 days for the same period in 2011/2012). The service is continuing the change of emphasis with more time being taken up on training linked to customer service.

The following qualifications are currently being undertaken during this quarter:

- 2 x FdSc Housing Studies
- 1 x FdSc Applied Computing
- 1 x BA (Hons) Advice Studied (Distance Learning)
- 7 x NVQ Level 2 - Customer Service
- 1 x NVQ Level 3 – Management
- 2 x NVQ Level 3 – Business Administration
- 2 x Level 3 Awards in Understanding the Principles and Practice of Assessment

In the 12 months between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012, 50% of staff have had appraisals. The breakdown for each service area is as follows:

Team	Done	Due	%
Senior Management Team	6	7	86%
NHM South	10	13	77%
NHM North, East & Income	20	32	63%
Repairs	61	164	37%
Community Support Services	37	54	69%
Renewal	10	15	67%
Strategy	1	4	25%
Total	145	289	50%

It has been a made priority for all service areas to focus on completing appraisals and this will be subject to regular review by the head of service.

3.3 Customer involvement

The service is celebrating its success in gaining first prize in a TPAS Cymru Award this year for mainstreaming tenant involvement. We aim to continue build on this work, and over the course of this year, the service is improving customer involvement across all teams.

To this end a Customer Involvement Group has been formed with representatives from all service areas who are working their way through a programme of workshops and discussions to ensure customers are put at the heart of all services.

Group members are to work alongside managers and teams to develop customer involvement plans for their service areas. Also, by creating a link between customer involvement and service plans we ensure that it is subject to robust reporting processes and that members are informed of our achievements.

It is pleasing to note that each service area has identified a specific area of work for customers to shape and influence. Examples of these include:

Neighbourhood Housing Management	An east area tenants forum will be developed to gain a better understanding of resident's views, needs and priorities to help guide future delivery of services and initiatives. The Forum will focus on improving the quality of life for local people and reducing crime and anti social behaviour.
Repairs & Maintenance	"Village Voices" will be developed who will assist in the identification and reporting of repairs issues in their communities and act as local champions/liaisons between the customer and the repair and maintenance service.
Neighbourhood Renewal	A wide range of stakeholders will be invited to share their views and influence the development of an Empty Homes Strategy and Policy to help the service identify solutions for bringing the counties empty homes back into use.

Customer involvement is not required for its own sake 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 that the number of complaints answered within 10 day deadline of 70% is under the 80% target. Of these complaints 67% were about repairs and these accounted for 44% of the out of target responses. All teams will be giving complaints additional priority in the coming quarter.

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/006a
 Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



HLS/012a
 Current tenant rent arrears



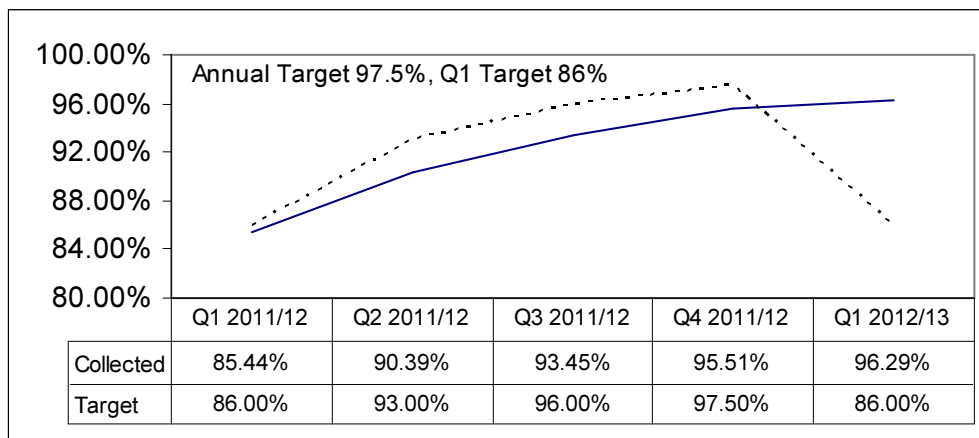
HLS/013
 Percentage rent loss due to empty property



HLS/014
 Letting Times

Supporting information for these indicators is provided below:

HLS/006a Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



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

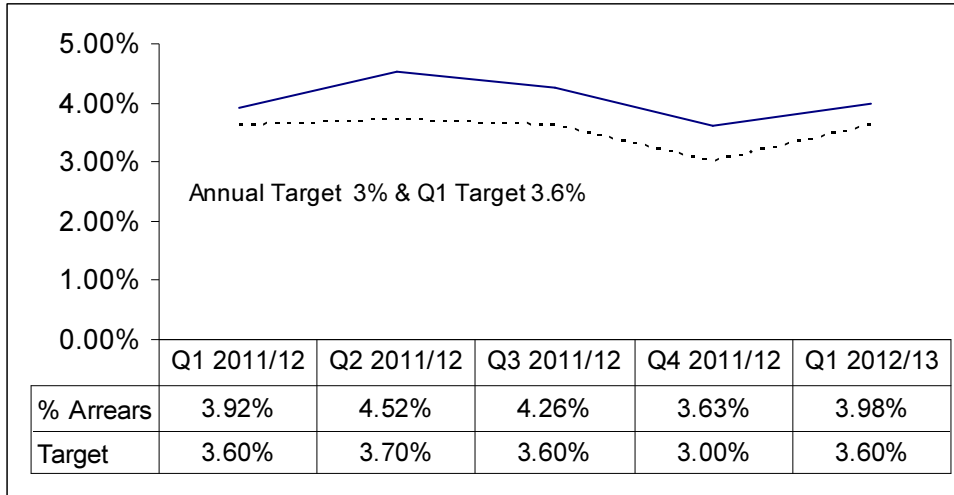
We have reviewed the way that we previously calculated and reported on this performance indicator. Based on the HouseMark guidance for this performance indicator, we are reporting 96.29% of rent collected for Q1. This figure represents the percentage of rent collected that was due for current tenants.

Whilst this figure shows a marked increase against the Q1 11/12 figure, this is felt to be a much fairer reflection on how we are doing and will mean that the Q2, Q3 and Q4 figures will not be subject to the large incremental performance indicator increases reported in previous years. This will also enable us to consider benchmarking against other organisations through HouseMark.

In relation to former tenant rent arrears, the Q1 figure was 1.28% of the total rent collectable for the year. 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, so it is anticipated that we will be reporting an improved performance in this area later in the year.

HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears



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

The quarter 1 performance figure of 3.98% compares well with the Q1 2010/11 figure of 3.92%. This Q1 current tenant arrears figure of £1.21m, when compared to the Q1 2010/11 figure of £1.14k.

However, as stated in the commentary for HLS006, if we take into account the Direct Debit payment which for 2010/11 fell within the Q1 figures, then we would have been reporting a difference of approximately £20k.

Due to the Direct Debit payment falling into wk14, the below banding table shows the wk14 comparison (rather than wk13), as this gives a much clearer snapshot of the current rent arrears situation.

Arrears Band	No of Accounts WK 14 11/12	No of Accounts WK 14 12/13	Total Amount Outstanding WK14 11/12	Total Amount Outstanding WK14 12/13
0-300	3,583	3,051	£275,769.50	£249,649.08
300-600	496	446	£212,402.25	£189,055.69
600-1000	247	257	£192,210.74	£201,390.14
1000-2000	209	209	£289,521.57	£290,168.09
2000-3000	63	76	£152,295.26	£179,262.67
3000-4000	18	22	£61,682.25	£73,990.60
4000-5000	6	12	£27,307.72	£53,712.49
5000-6000	1	1	£5,008	£5,651.30
6000-7000	1	-	£6,211	-
7000-8000	-	1	-	£7,633.84
Total	4624	4075	£1,222,408.29	1,250,513.90

The above banding table shows that:

- The overall number of rent accounts in arrears has continued to reduce;
- The number of accounts owing less than £1,000 has continued to reduce;
- The number of rent accounts over £1,000 has increased;
- The case showing in the £7,000-8,000 banding was due to a large Housing Benefit deduction being made direct from a rent account – this deduction has subsequently been reversed so it no longer affects the rent arrears outstanding balance;
- The largest arrears case has fallen a banding.

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.

The 2012/13 targets for both individual and Income Team levels has been set at a 10% reduction in the end of year figure. This equates to a target figure of £950k, which would be a reduction in monetary terms of £105k. Whilst this is seen as a challenging target, the reduction in rent arrears over the past 5 months would indicate that this is an achievable target.

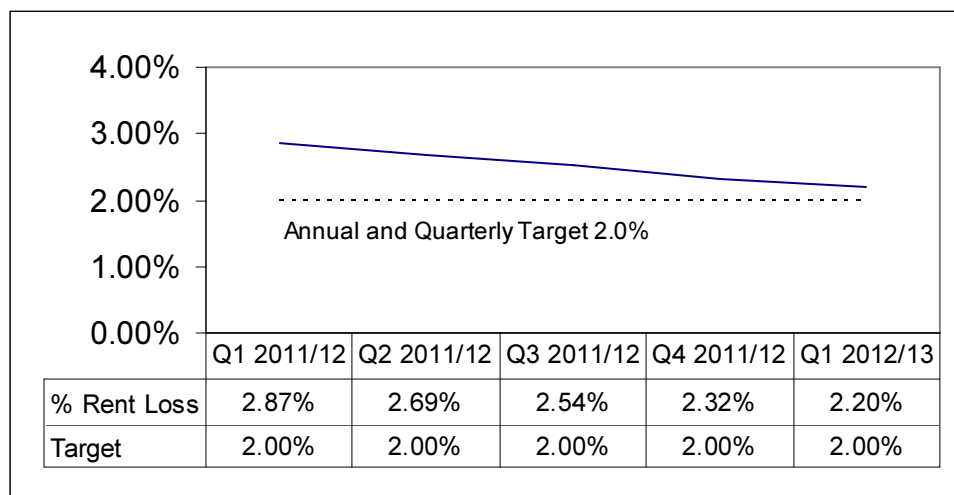
As contained within the 2011/12 Service Plan, work is continuing with the Procurement Unit to tender for an outside collection agency to recover former tenant rent arrears.

Work is also ongoing to identify the names and addresses of the current tenants who will be affected by the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act and in particular, the reduction of Housing Benefit for any working age tenants who are under occupying their home by one of more bedrooms. There is also a North East Wales project which is looking at ways that housing organisations (including Flintshire CC) can reduce the impact of Welfare Reform. It is clear that policy decisions will need to be made in the

near future on how the authority will deal with any tenants who have a shortfall in their Housing Benefit payments due to the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act.

Overall analysis of the figures shows that performance is expected to continue steadily improving through Q2 and Q3.

HLS/013 Percentage rent loss due to empty property



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

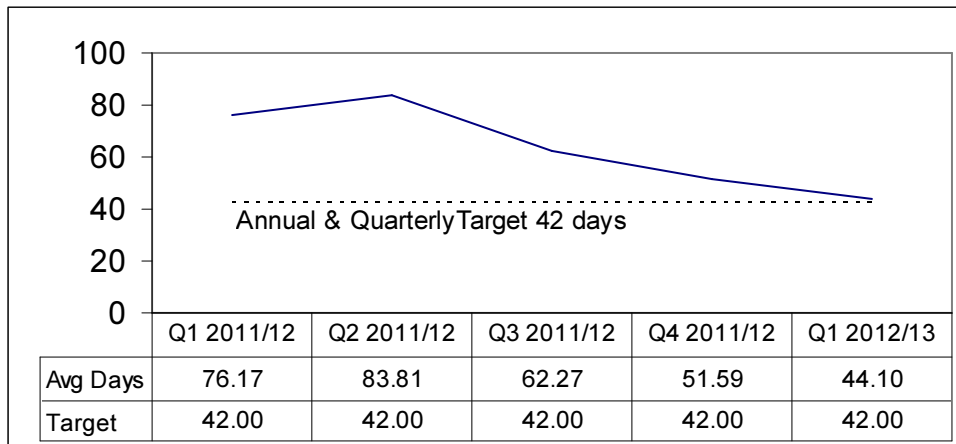
It is pleasing to see that the quarter 1 performance shows continued and sustainable improvement against last years quarterly figures. The Q1 performance of 2.20% a reduction in the rent loss compared to the Q1 11/12 figure of 2.87% and the Q4 11/12 figure of 2.32%.

There were a total of 134 lets for Q1 12/13, which is a decrease when compared to the previous quarter (Q4) total lets of 156. The analysis below shows that there was an increase in the number of properties that became void during Q1 (compared to the previous quarter), but that the overall number of lets over the past 12 months has been higher than the number of properties that have become void.

Quarter	Became vacant	No of lets
Q1 12/13	147	134
Q4 11/12	136	149
Q3 11/12	137	160
Q2 11/12	126	125
Total	546	568

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.

HLS/014 Letting Times



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

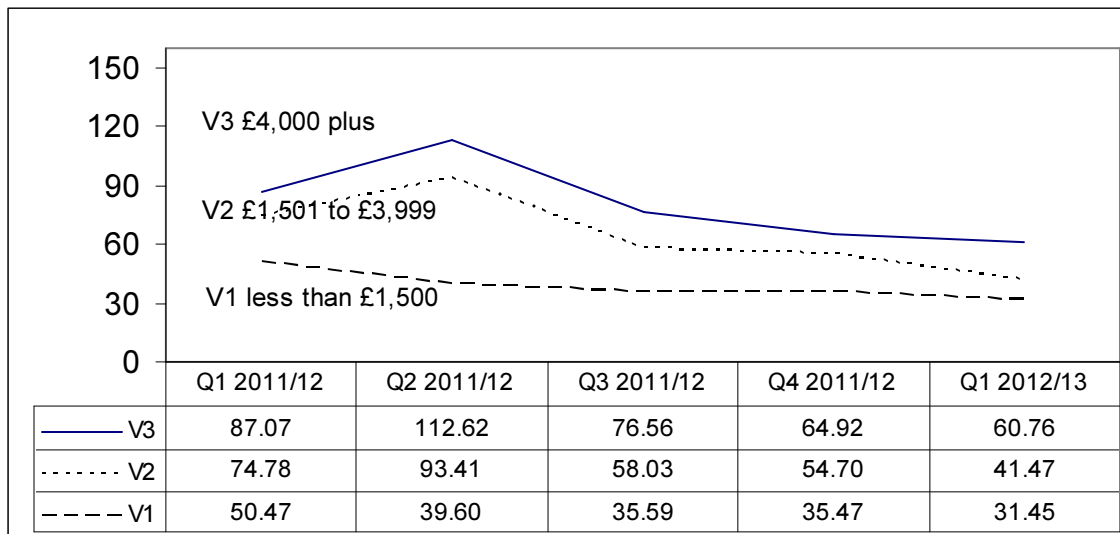
It is pleasing to note that the overall figure for the turnover on day to day voids has again improved from Q4 to Q1 by over 7 days, which is a significant reduction from the Q4 performance and takes the performance very close to the target of 42 days.

As reported previously, we are no longer replacing kitchens automatically in empty properties. Neighbourhood Housing Officers are also still continuing to let properties and give 1 rent free week where necessary to ensure the tenant has time to decorate, connect to gas and electrics supplies, and order oil without impacting on void times. Both of these initiatives have had a positive effect on performance.

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

	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

As can be seen above, the average duration for all three areas have reduced. In particular, the average number of days to let a property has reduced down to the original target set of 7 days. This is a reflection of the hard work and focus of the Neighbourhood Housing teams in letting properties within the 7 days target, wherever possible.



The above graph shows the biggest improvement in V2's, but there have been improvements in all three categories.

There were 14 void properties during Q1 which cost over £6k to repair and as such have not been included in the above performance figures, as they are being considered as major repairs.

V2 properties (costing between £999 and £3,499 to repair) were again the biggest group in Q1 (as with Q4) with 55 properties, compared to 17 V3 properties and 11 V1 properties.

This performance indicator still remains a priority for both the Housing Asset Management service and the Neighbourhood Management service.

4.2 Service Plan Updates

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


4.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

5 Housing Asset Maintenance

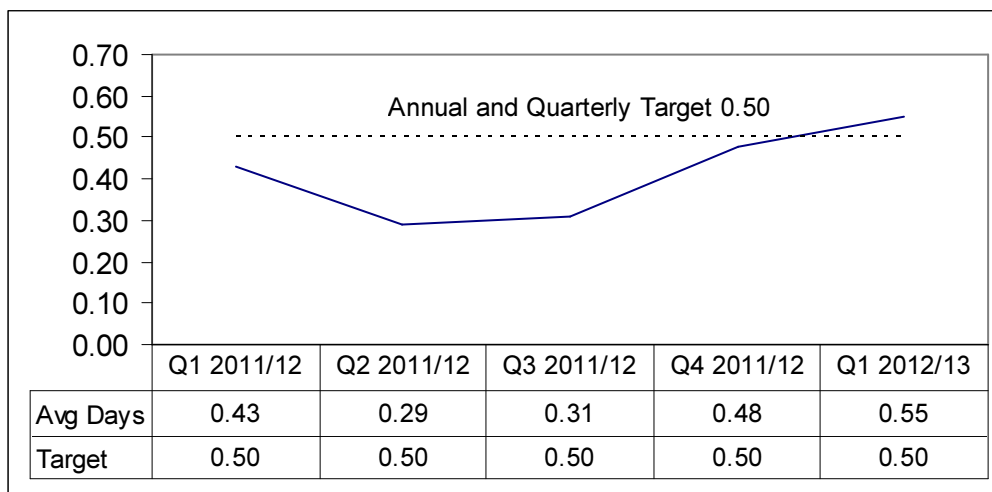
5.1 Performance Commentary

It is pleasing to note that performance in the emergency and urgent categories has improved from quarter 2. Targets were not met for the following indicators for Housing Asset Management:

-  **HLS/10a**
Emergency repairs
-  **HLS/10b**
Urgent repairs
-  **HLS/10c**
Non-urgent repairs

Supporting information for these indicators is provided below:

HLS/10a Emergency Repairs



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

The outturn of 0.55 days in emergency repairs has narrowly missed the target of 0.5 days. The reason for the downturn this quarter can be attributed to staff training and the implementation of mobile working.

Staff training on the use of mobile technology has had a detrimental effect on performance across all three priorities. The table below shows a significant increase in the total hours spent on training last year and in this quarter alone an additional 237 hours has been spent on training that is attributable to mobile working.

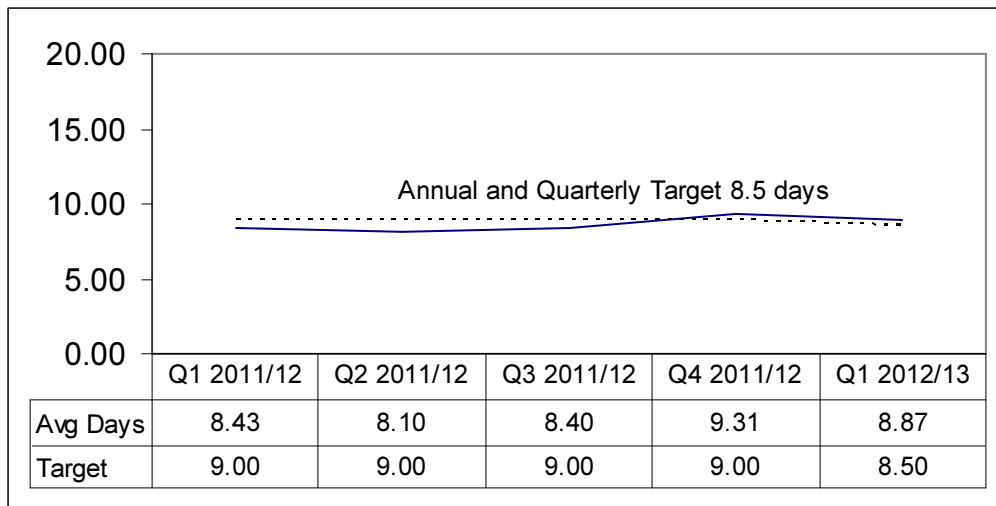
Training Days Comparison					
2010/11	2011/12	Increase	Q1 2011/12	Q1 2012/13	Increase
1375	3092	124.87%	694	931	34.14%

In addition to this a substantial amount of time has also been lost through the malfunctioning of the mobile software, which on occasions can suspend hundreds of

job tickets in the ether. It requires the operative with a validations sitting at a terminal trawling through job tickets to manually retrieve the information from the system.

The software supplier, Capita, have issued us with a new version which should resolve the issues. The new version is currently being tested prior to its implementation which is scheduled for the end of August.

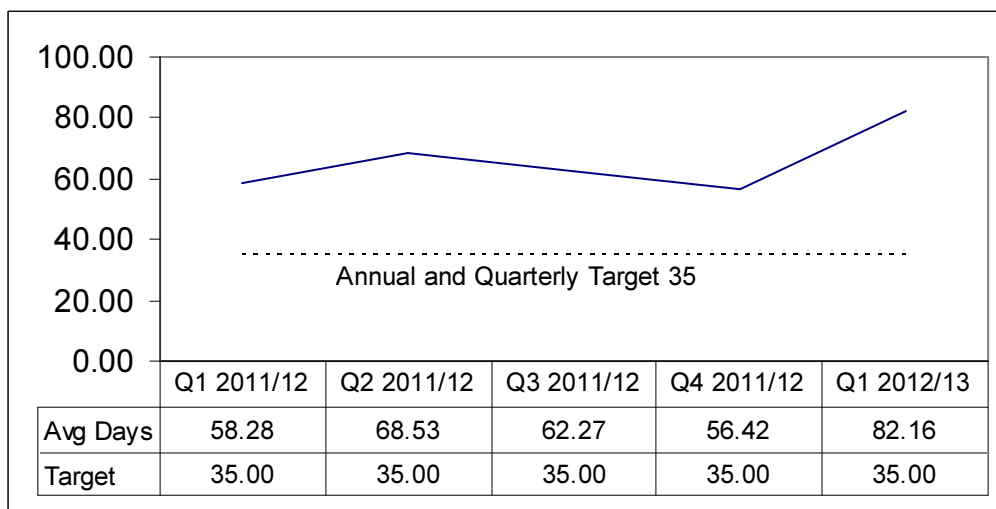
HLS/10b Urgent repairs



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

The outturn of 8.87 days in non-urgent repairs whilst narrowly missing this year's more ambitious target of 8.5 days does represent a significant improvement on the Q4 outturn of 9.31 days. It must also be noted that staff training for the implementation of mobile working has reduced productivity in this quarter as explained in HLS/10a above.

HLS/10c Non-urgent repairs



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

Work continues to address the backlog of non-urgent repairs and as expected the success of this has reflected negatively in the outturn this quarter due to the older jobs distorting the average. However as shown from the following table when

splitting the backlog from the day to day repairs it can be seen that the average time for the new jobs is well within the target.

Q1 Breakdown of Non-Urgent Repairs	Number of jobs	Average Days
Backlog of repairs	1249	182.91
Day to day repairs	1770	11.06

The number of out of target non urgent repairs is currently C500, which on an annual jobs completed figure of 46,000 is about 3 days work. These jobs have been prioritised for completion over the last few months and those jobs which are planned works but have been incorrectly classified as non urgent repairs have been collated and options to address these are currently being prepared.

The jobs completed out of target range from 35 to 858 days, the majority of which are between 35 and 400 days, however, there are a number of very old jobs that have been completed that have had a significant effect on the overall average.

5.2 Service Plan Updates

Work continues on all areas of the service plan for this area. Below is commentary on areas of deviation from the timetable of delivery of the service plan.

3a) Implement Staff Restructure

The plan to remove vehicles from some staff members by the end of June has met strong opposition from trade unions and is currently subject to an appeal, the removal of vehicles is linked to the implementation of the restructure, which is now anticipated to be end of September subject to the receipt of job grades from the JEQ team.

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

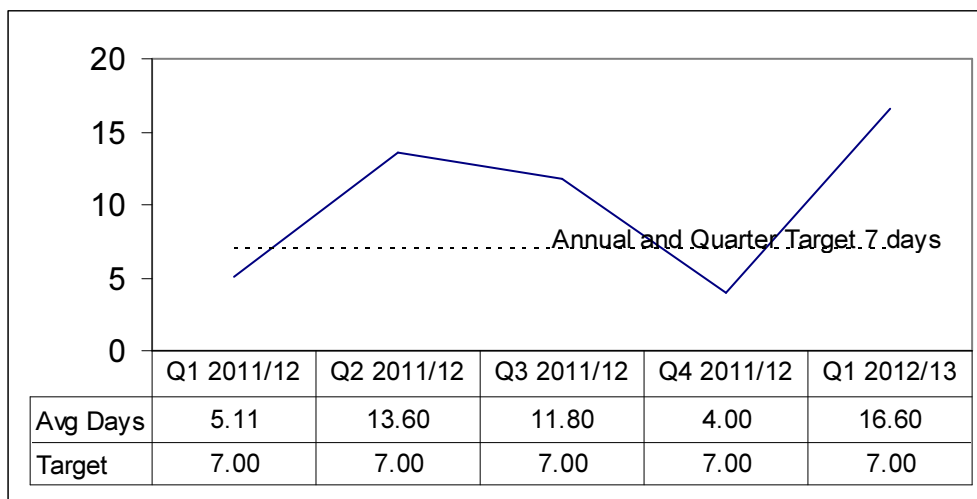
Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



HHA/017A

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

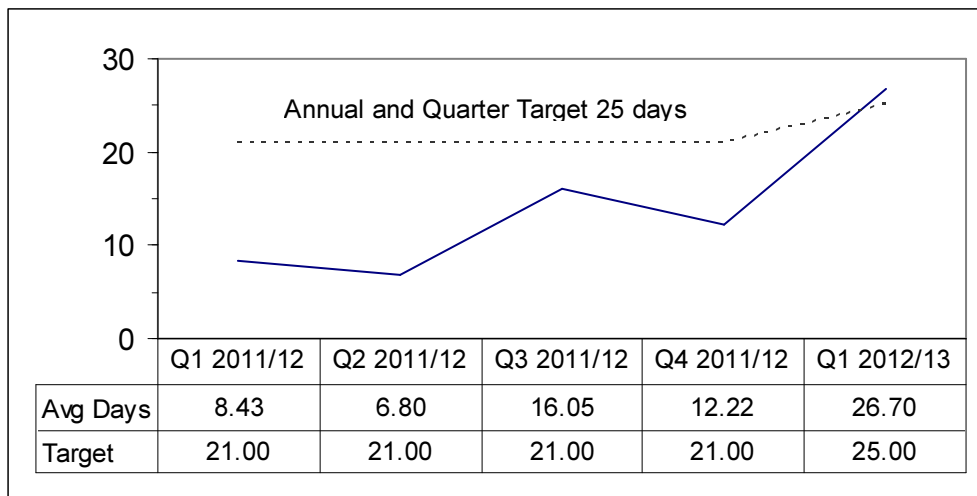
HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



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

In total there were 5 households placed in bed & breakfast during this quarter. Four families were moved on to more appropriate alternative accommodation within 2 weeks, however, there were particular health issues with one family which meant that a lengthy stay in bed and breakfast was unavoidable.

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 the client base contained a large proportion of single households who are becoming increasingly harder to place due to a shortage of accommodation. It must be noted that Bed & Breakfast is the only form of temporary accommodation available to this client group.

We aim to reduce the time people stay in bed & breakfast accommodation by using our own stock as temporary housing. We have currently identified 5 properties across the County consisting of 2 family size houses and 3 properties suitable for single people. These properties will be available to let within quarter 2. In addition a further 3 bed property has been made available as shared accommodation, specifically for young people. This property is affordable and allows them to move on from hostel accommodation. It is worth remembering that we still need to look at the further utilisation of our own stock at particular the re-designation of some of our sheltered housing stock.

6.2 Service Plans

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

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 £600,000. This figure comprises of £500,000 in on-going annual payments and £100,000 in one-off lump sum payments.
- Over 400 Flintshire residents received specialist advice and assistance from a welfare rights worker with their welfare benefit and/or tax credit problem. Of these residents, 88 received advice and representation in connection with appealing an adverse decision on their benefit entitlement before a First-Tier Tribunal.

Challenges

- *Impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012* - effectively managing the increased demand from Flintshire residents who are experiencing changes to their welfare benefit entitlement. At the end of June 2012, there were 112 residents on the caseworker service waiting list.
- *Increased Government funding to the Court Service to reduce the UK wide backlog of appeals* – the Court Service with their additional resources are now preparing appeals quicker. However, 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 through effective partnership working and through the development of initiatives being progressed by the Flintshire Advice Management Board, such as the 'Single Access Gateway'.
- Undertake a lean review of the Advice and Homelessness service – examining the journey of customers who access the caseworker service and developing an integrated database.

7.2 Service Plan Updates

4b Homeless & Advice Services

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area with the exception of the recruitment of a programme manager to run four projects aimed at mitigating the impact of welfare reform.

As no suitable candidates were found through the recruitment process current management resource is being used (part-time) from both the Housing Benefit and Housing Options to lead on the projects. This will be supported through other staff members as needed.

8 Housing Renewal

8.1 General Update

The Housing Renewal area continues to build on the good work delivered last year. The following areas are worth highlighting this 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 requesting assistance. 18 property surveys were undertaken and scheduled work will now be taken forward for loan support. A total of 8 loans were completed during this quarter, with a total work value of £85,282. Enquiries for support have seen a small decrease from the last quarter and the service will be exploring promotional activities alongside the launch of the new equity and non equity repayment loans during quarter 2.

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 of 98 days compared to 240 days in quarter 2 of last year. This significant improvement can be attributed to a review of the disabled adaptations process, which identified areas where delay could easily be addressed. An example of a change made was that staff from Housing Renewal now complete grant applications with service users to ensure accurate information and timely return whereas previously it is estimated that this saves at least 20 working days. A total of 67 disabled adaptations were completed during the quarter.

Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area

The existing Group Repair contract came to an end during this Quarter, with a total number 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. The tender exercise will be completed in September, with the aim that contractors will be appointed and start work on site during Quarter 3. The tender documentation ensures that maximum use of both local labour and supply chains takes place. There will also be provision made for local apprenticeships as part of the ongoing work. A further commitment to promoting opportunities for local people is included within our environmental schemes, which have received 132 hours of work from volunteers and 36 hours work by local school children in this Quarter.

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 commenced in this Quarter. A total of 16 new heating systems and 3 external wall insulations took place. A further 190 properties have been surveyed and 38 additional enquiries have been received. There was a total Council spend of £66,500 in this Quarter and an additional £41,954 of CESP monies were levered in from NPower. All CESP works must be completed by the end of Quarter 3 before the introduction of a replacement funding mechanism. The vast majority of the CESP work will take place in the next Quarter and a more detailed report will be provided at that stage.

Empty Homes

Welsh Government have finalised the arrangements for delivery of the national House into Homes Initiative. Funding of £10m is being provided for interest free loans across Wales, with the aim of returning 5000 long term vacant properties back in to use over the next 5 years. The funding will be devolved across the 6 regions and Flintshire has been asked to lead for North Wales region. This will involve the Housing Service managing a £2.4m recycling loan fund across the region, which includes Flintshire's share valued at £482K. In terms of the scheme, Flintshire has already received expressions of interest from 9 property owners, with total loans valued at £475K. Those applications need to be assessed to ensure they meet the scheme criteria. However, assuming they do, Flintshire's allocation is already committed and a waiting list will be prepared.

Work has progressed on the enhancing the empty homes service for the county. A data cleansing exercise as seen all properties suspected as being empty across the county surveyed. Just short of 1400 properties have been surveyed based on council tax data. From the surveys 882 properties have been closed on the empty homes system. 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.

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

Work on the Local Housing Strategy progresses and will be presented to Scrutiny Committee in September

Gypsy & Travellers

The work on meeting the needs of the Gypsy & Traveller community in Flintshire remains a priority for this service area.

Excellent work has been carried out by the Housing Options Team in developing a good working relationship with the occupants and management of the Riverside site. Housing Strategy is currently seeking solutions to ensure a management agreement is put into place acceptable to both the authority and the gypsy council.

The results of the North Wales Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment, will be reported to members in autumn

Affordable Housing

The delivery of affordable housing for the county is progressing well, with 16 properties both delivered and completed on between March and June this year. Thirty more properties are scheduled for delivery by November with 14 of these already allocated to people registered on the Affordable Homeownership Register.

The following provision for affordable housing from private developers has been secured through the planning process:

- 140 shared equity units (council retains 30% equity)
- 26 gifted units
- £700k in commuted sums

The timetable for the development of these schemes is dependent on external factors such as the economic climate and the availability of mortgage products.

Work also continues successfully to market affordable housing initiatives including the delivery of the county's second Homebuyers Fair to be held 8 September 2012. In Q1 66 new registrations were accepted onto the register bringing the current total to 255.

Performance Support

Work is underway to explore opportunities and implement new benchmarking arrangements for the service along with the enhancing management information arrangements for all service areas.

Specific projects to support performance and service improvements across the county include new lean reviews, improvement of procedures and IT systems for empty homes, and supporting the roll out of CBASS to replace the warden service.

Business Systems

Current work in this area includes enhancements to the IBS system to support the continued rollout of mobile working and enhancing the reporting functionality of the system.

9.2 Service Plan Updates

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

9.3 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)

CD12a Housing Strategy

The development of the Local Housing Strategy is progressing and is due for presentation to Scrutiny Committee in September 2012.

Housing Strategy represents the authority on a number regional and local boards to identify and develop opportunities between housing, the economy, health and the environment. Whilst the Local Housing Strategy will indirectly influence the plans, these areas still require focus. It will be a priority to formalise requirements and plans to address these areas over the next quarter.

It must be recognised that although not linked to strategic work there does exist pockets of good practice across Housing some examples in relation to housing and the economy are as follows:

- Apprenticeships opportunities – tendering for the programme of capital works to council stock is creating apprenticeship opportunities for local people.
- Housing Renewal – tendering for phase 2 of the renewal area seeks to make use of local labour and suppliers.
- Affordable Homeownership – work with private developers is delivering affordable housing for the county without use of public funds, through the use planning legislation.

CD14 Housing Ballot

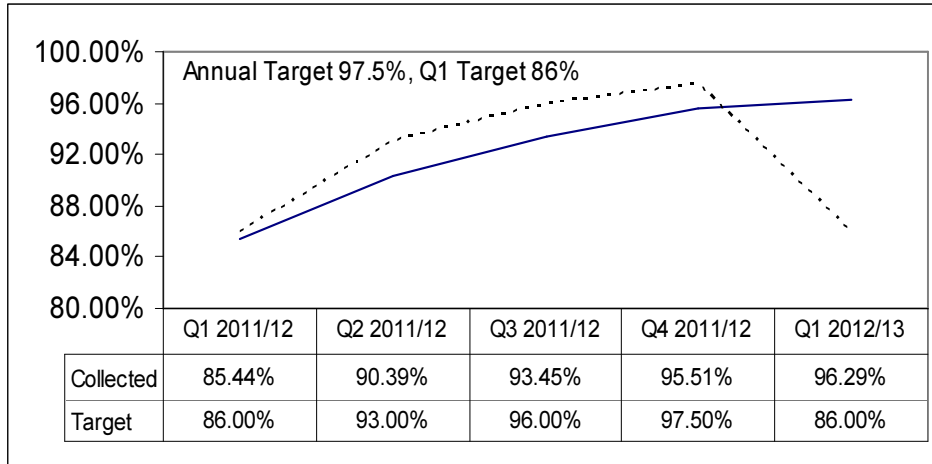
The housing ballot was concluded in March 2012 with the council's tenants voting to remain with Flintshire County Council. The Council will continue to maximise housing investment and improve services.

9.4 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

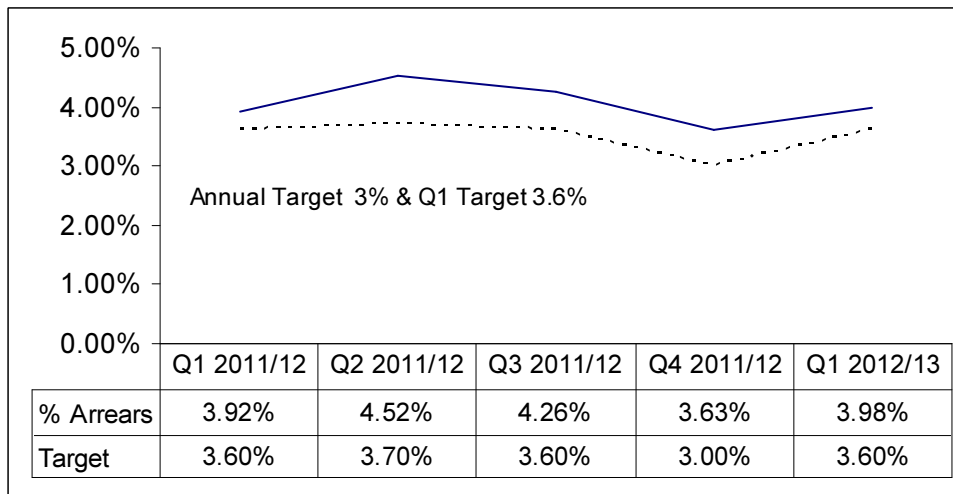
Appendix A – Performance Graphs

HLS/006a Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



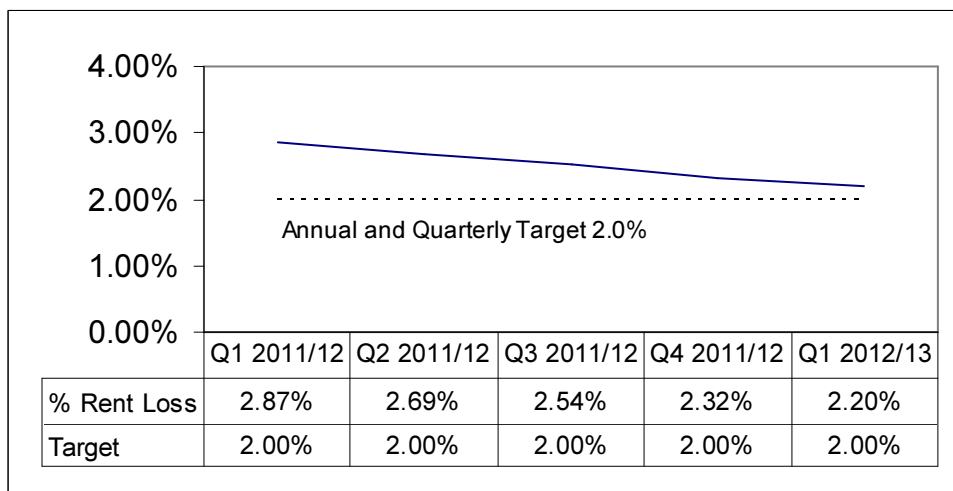
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears



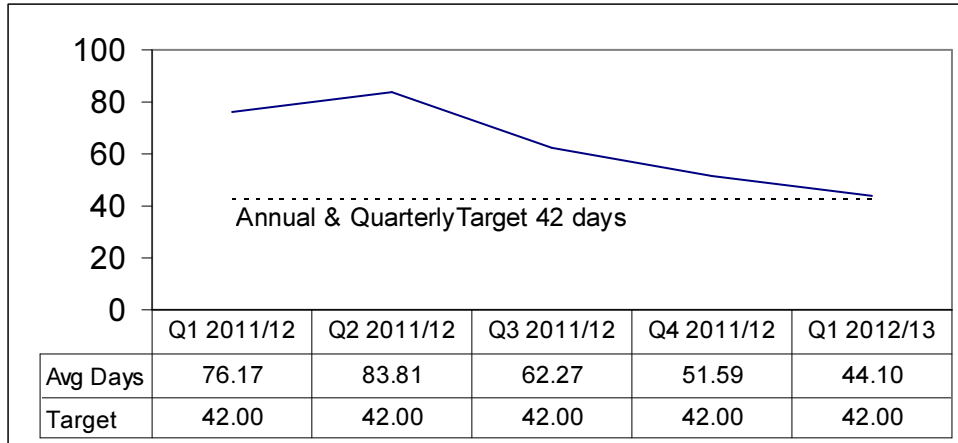
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/013 Percentage rent loss due to empty property



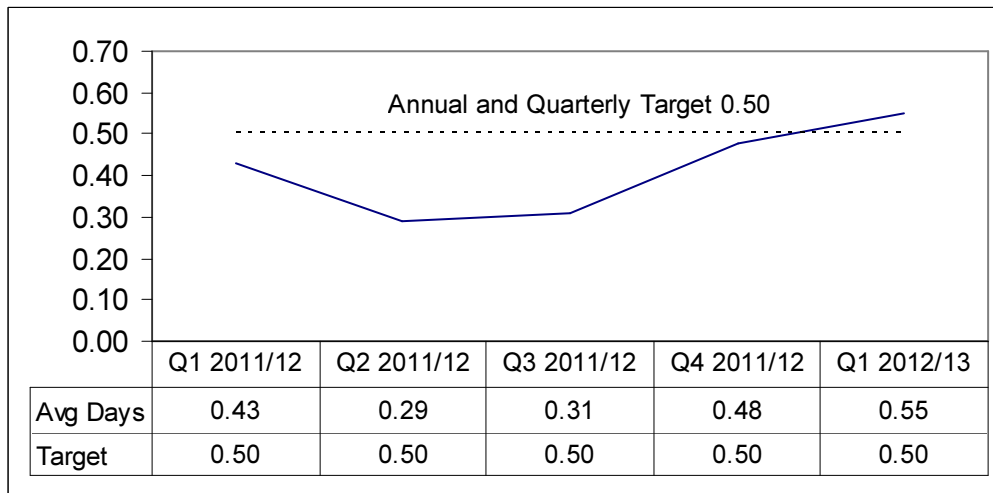
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/014 Letting Times



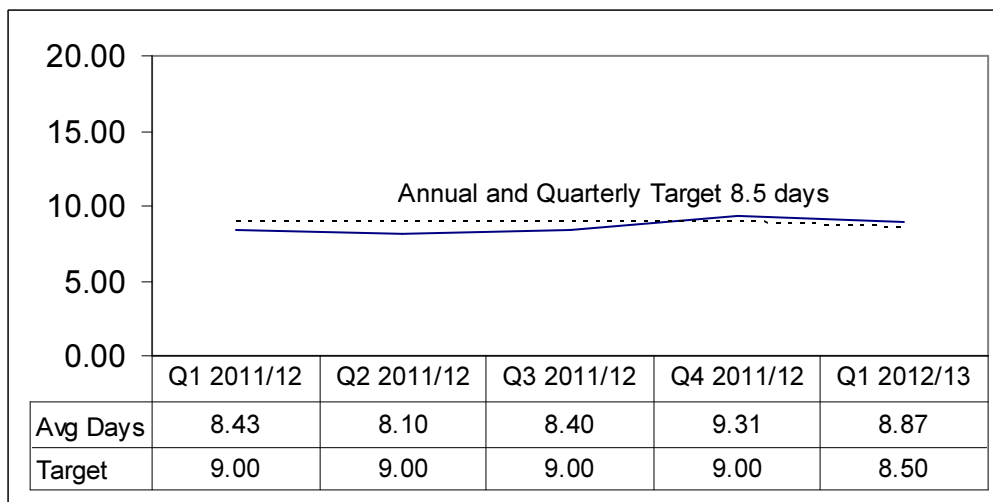
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10a Emergency Repairs



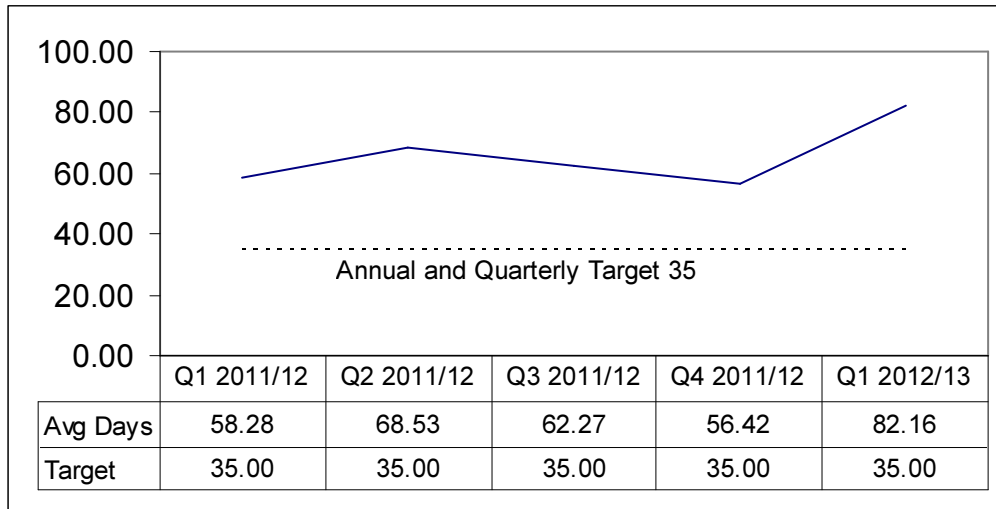
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10b Urgent Repairs



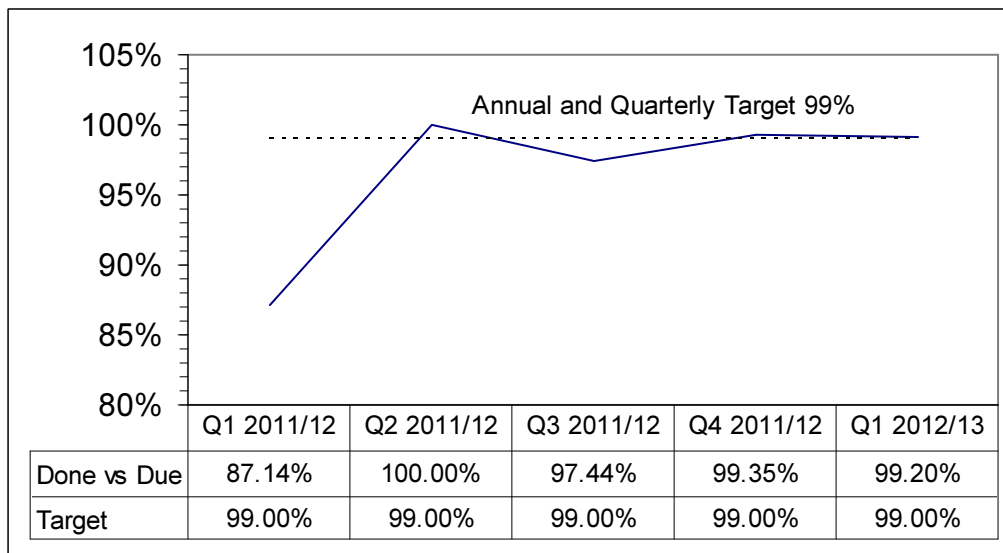
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10c Non-urgent repairs



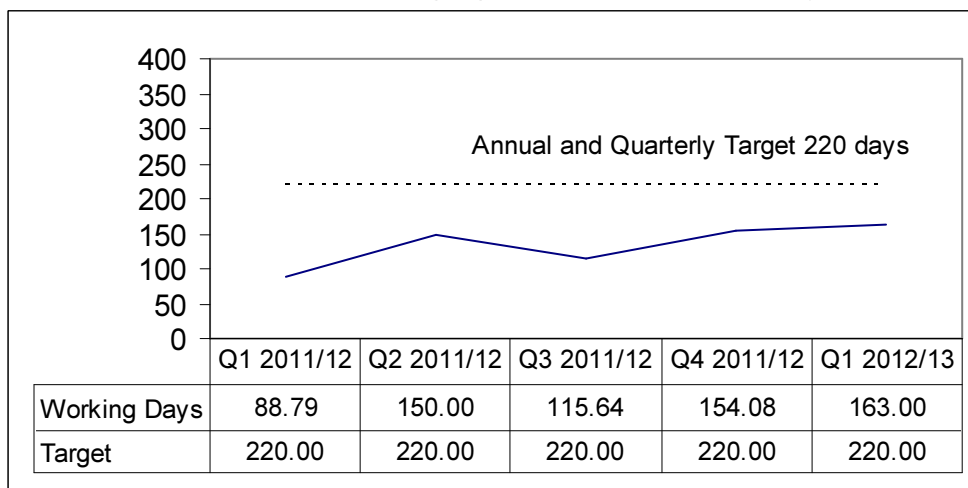
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate



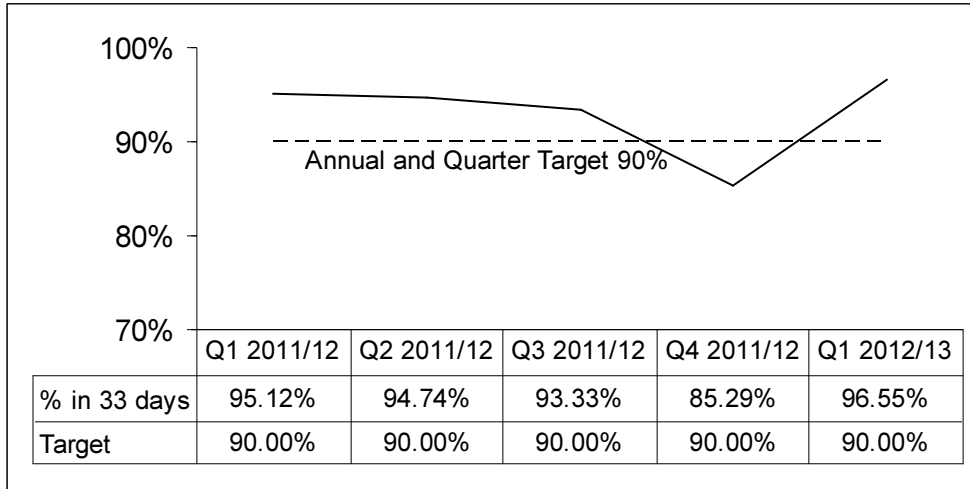
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/002 Timeliness of discharging full homelessness duty



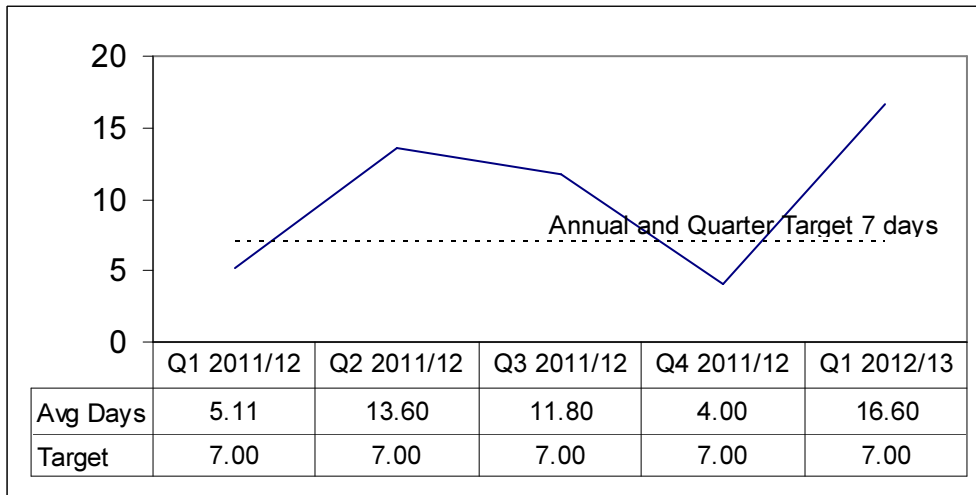
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within target



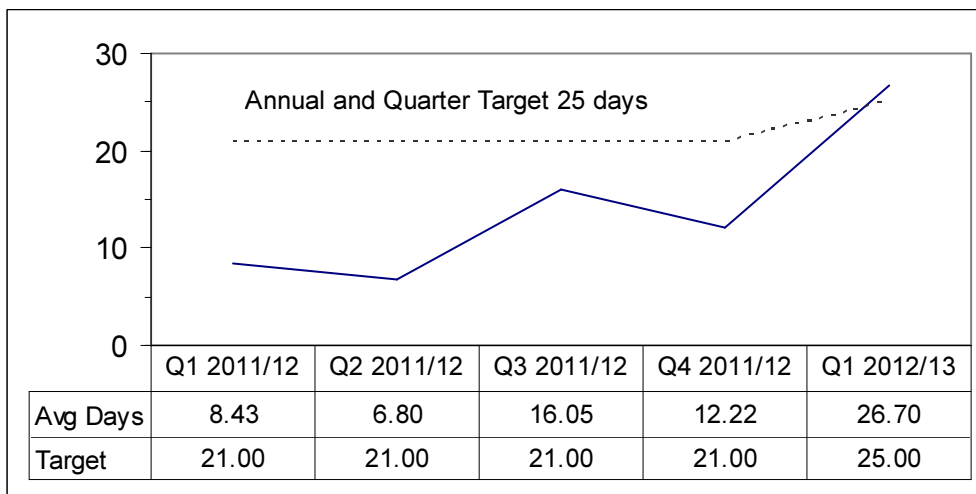
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

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



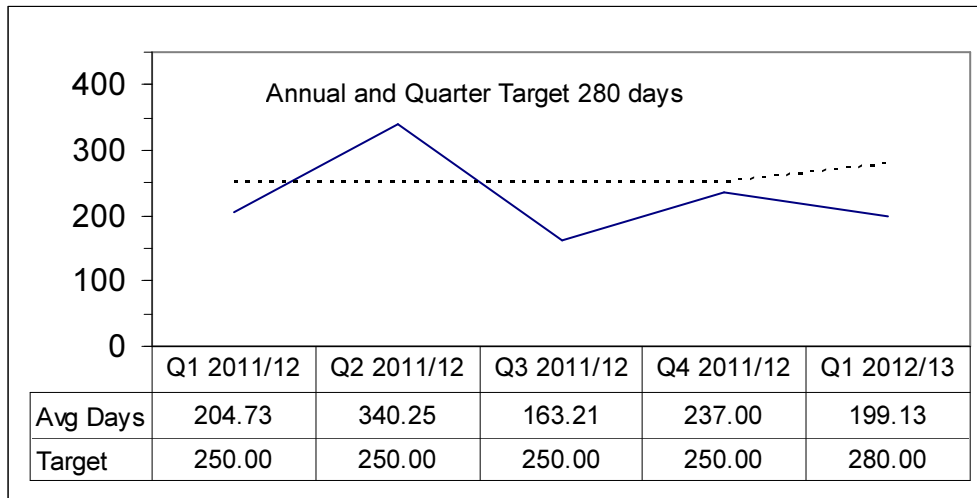
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

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.