

25 November 2013

**Quarter 2 2013/14
Performance Management Report**

**Report of Corporate Management Team
Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
Councillor Simon Henig, Leader**

Purpose of the Report

1. To present progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators (PIs) for the Altogether Better Council theme and report other significant performance issues for the first quarter of 2013/14.

Background

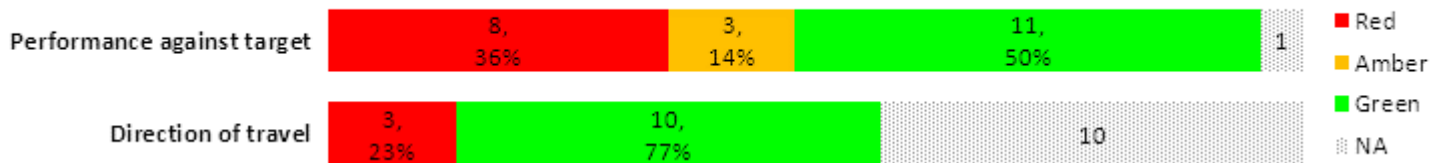
2. This is the second quarterly corporate performance report of 2013/14 for the council highlighting performance for the period July to September 2013. The report contains information on key performance indicators, risks and Council Plan progress.
3. The report sets out an overview of performance and progress for the Altogether Better Council theme. Key performance indicator progress is reported against two indicator types which comprise of:
 - a. Key target indicators – targets are set for indicators where improvements can be measured regularly and where improvement can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
 - b. Key tracker indicators – performance will be tracked but no targets are set for indicators which are long-term and/or which the council and its partners only partially influence.
4. A summary of key performance indicators is provided at Appendix 3. More detailed performance information and Altogether theme analyses are available on request from performance@durham.gov.uk.

Developments since last quarter

5. There is a stronger focus this year on volume measures in our performance framework. This will allow us to better quantify productivity in the forthcoming year and to monitor the effects of reductions in resources and increases in volume of activity driven by the economic situation and national policy changes such as welfare reform. Analysis of some key measures is available at Appendix 4.

Altogether Better Council: Overview

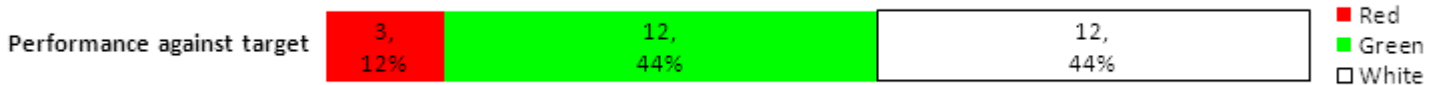
Target Performance indicators



Tracker Performance indicators



Actions



Council Performance

6. Key achievements this quarter include:

- During July to September 2013, 78.1% of sundry debt owed to the council was paid within 30 days which is above the target of 73%. The advanced collection module of the Oracle system continues to be refined to ensure that all necessary action is taken promptly and efficiently.
- The average waiting time at a customer access point is 4 minutes, which is well within the 15 minutes target. Performance has improved from the previous quarter (5 minutes 6 seconds) despite footfall increasing in our Customer Access Points (CAPs) with 10,723 more customers visiting our CAPs between July and September (93,059) compared to quarter 1 (82,336) (see Appendix 4, Chart 1).
- During quarter 2, new housing benefit (HB) claims were processed in 20.23 days on average and the target of 23 days has been achieved. The year to date figure is 23.57 days and is under the annual target of 25 days. New council tax support (CTS) claims were processed in 22.11 days on average which was better than the period target of 23 days. The year to date figure is 26.54 days and this remains just outside of the annual target of 25 days. The volume of new CTS claims has fallen from 3,822 in quarter 1 to 3,389 this quarter. The volume of HB claims has fallen from 3,334 in quarter 1 to 2,962 this quarter (see Appendix 4, Chart 3).

Processing rates for changes of circumstance were affected by year end processes but have improved significantly during quarter 2. The average time taken to process change of circumstances was on average 11.74 days for HB claims and 12.68 days for CTS claims. Performance remained outside the period target of 10.7 days. A number of technological and process developments are planned and their impact upon processing will be closely monitored over the coming months. The volume of change of circumstances for CTS claims has fallen from 30,326 in quarter 1 to 27,215 this quarter. The volume of change of circumstances for HB claims has fallen from 32,574 in quarter 1 to 25,152 this quarter (see Appendix 4, Chart 4).

- Tenant rent arrears have fallen for Durham City Homes from 2.51% in quarter 2 last year to 2.24% this quarter and the target of 2.5% has been met. Arrears currently stand at £542,400. Dale and Valley Homes performance of 1.64% is well within target of 3% and it has improved from 2.03% reported last year. Arrears currently stand at £264,902. Arrears

for East Durham Homes have fallen slightly from 2.94% in quarter 2 last year to 2.89% this quarter and the target of 3% has been achieved. Arrears currently stand at £831,695.

- e. Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days was 85% this quarter, which met the national standard of 85% for the first time. Performance has improved from 73.4% last quarter and from 80% reported at quarter 2 last year. The volume of FOI requests was 249 this quarter and was higher than 227 reported in the previous quarter and 221 reported 12 months earlier (see Appendix 4, Chart 5).
 - f. There is an action in the Resources Service Plan to increase the availability of technology across the county by developing the Digital Durham programme. In September 2013, Cabinet agreed the Digital Durham Programme's high level superfast broadband deployment plan, due to commence in April 2014 and designed to maximise geographic coverage in the most cost effective manner. Positive feedback for the Digital Durham Team and Programme resulted from MP Ed Vaizey's (Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries) visit in September.
7. Key performance improvement issues for this theme are:

- a. During quarter 2, 91.3% of undisputed supplier invoices were paid within 30 days. This is slightly below the target of 92% but represents an improvement from 84.3% reported in the same quarter last year. A number of developments have been introduced or are underway to improve invoice payment processing.
- b. Carrying out and recording employee appraisals in accordance with the council's agreed policy and procedure is an ongoing area for improvement. The percentage of performance appraisals completed and recorded this quarter was 75.3%. This represents a significant increase over the quarter 1 rate of 56.53%, but is well short of the 80% corporate target. Management action is being taken to deliver improvements.
- c. Sickness levels remain too high and require improvement. The number of days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) in the rolling year period has decreased from 9.35 days as at quarter 1 2013/14 to 9.31 days as at the end of quarter 2 2013/14. The number of days lost per FTE is an improvement on the 9.57 average as at the end of quarter 2 2012/13. The figure of 9.31 days is above the target of 9.05 days lost per FTE. The percentage of posts with no sickness absence recorded (excluding schools) for the period July to September 2013 was 78.31%, an improvement from quarter 1 (77.64%) and 12 months earlier (75.18%).
- d. The 2013/14 recovery cycles for the collection of council tax and business rates have been adjusted to ensure that late payers are picked up more quickly this year and that recovery action is taken in a more timely manner.

The collection rate for council tax of 55.18% during quarter 2 was 0.03 percentage points above last year's figure and 1.35 percentage points above the 2011/12 performance but is below the challenging profiled year to date target of 57%. Factoring in the increase in council tax collectable for 2013/14, the collection figure is an early indication that the changes to the recovery cycles are having a positive impact. The overall collection rate for council tax, excluding the current year, was 99% at the end of September 2013, which was above the target of 98.5%.

The collection rate for national non domestic rates (NNDR) of 60.71% during quarter 2 was 0.46 percentage points above the same point last year but was below the challenging profiled year to date target of 62%. The increased collection figure is an early indication that the changes to the recovery cycles are having a positive impact and is welcomed in light of the funding changes in 2013/14. The overall collection for NNDR, excluding the current year, was 99.2% at the end of September, which was above the target of 98.5%.

- e. Between July and September, 226,204 telephone calls were answered (88% of all calls received), this is 6,203 more than same period in quarter 1 (219,974); this is an

improvement of the abandoned call rate which was reported as 18% for the last quarter. During quarter 2, 78% of telephone calls were answered within 3 minutes and although this is slightly below the target of 80%, it is a significant improvement on quarter 1, when 62% of calls were answered within 3 minutes. The volume of telephone calls show 3.6% fewer calls received this quarter (258,047) when compared with quarter 1 (267,752) (see Appendix 4, Chart 2). 2,826 more emails (an increase of 27%) were received during quarter 2 (13,186) compared to quarter 1 (10,360).

- f. Key Council Plan actions behind target in this theme include:
- i. To develop a robust performance framework to capture the effectiveness of Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) by September 2013. This has been delayed until February 2014.
 - ii. To produce a Regeneration Investment Plan to maximise external funding for the council and its partners by September 2013. This has been delayed until December 2013. Initial work has been undertaken on identifying a list of projects in RED but in order to produce an Investment Plan further work is required by heads of service to refine and prioritise this schedule of projects further.
 - iii. To revise the council's Organisational Development Strategy to strengthen the approach towards workforce planning and development by September 2013. This has been delayed until January 2014 due to focus on other priorities. A revised draft Strategy is being developed.

8. The key risks to successfully delivering the objectives of this theme are:

- a. *Government ongoing funding cuts which now extend to at least 2017/18 will continue to have an increasing major impact on all Council services.* Management consider it highly probable that this risk could occur. These forecasts have been included as far as possible in the new financial model for the MTFP. This risk will be managed and mitigated to best effect through early engagement with Cabinet, a timetable of key milestone dates, and sound financial forecasting, based on a thorough examination of the Government's red book plans.
- b. *If there was to be slippage in delivery of the agreed MTFP savings projects, this will require further savings to be made from other areas, which may result in further service reductions and job losses.* Management consider it possible that this risk could occur, which will result in a funding shortfall, damaged reputation and reduced levels of service delivery. To mitigate the risk, the implementation of the delivery plan by the Assistant Chief Executive (ACE) is closely monitored by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet as described above. It should be recognised that this will be a significant risk for at least the next 4 years.
- c. *If we were to fail to comply with Central Government's Public Services Network (PSN) Code of Connection criteria, this would put some of our core business processes, such as revenues and benefits, at risk.* Management consider it probable that this risk will occur. In May 2013, an ICT health check was carried out and a number of recommendations were made to bring the council to a position of compliance. Failure to be compliant can result in the council being disconnected from the PSN, resulting in loss of access to key systems and services.
- d. *Potential restitution of search fee income going back to 2005.* Management consider it highly probable that the risk will occur as a firm of solicitors has taken action against all councils across England and Wales to recover the alleged land charge fees overpayment. The mitigation of this risk is dependent upon the outcome of the negotiations and litigation currently being defended by lawyers instructed in group litigation.

- e. *If local authority schools and other local authority services choose not to take council services, together with the loss of community buildings both technical and building services could see a loss of business.* Management consider it probable that this risk will occur, and a draft booklet will be produced to promote Building Services ready for distribution throughout council services by the end of 2013.

Recommendations and reasons

9. That the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive the report and consider any performance issues arising there from.

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Tel: 03000 268071 E-Mail jenny.haworth@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Latest performance information is being used to inform corporate, service and financial planning.

Staffing

Performance against a number of relevant corporate health PIs has been included to monitor staffing levels and absence rates.

Risk

Reporting of significant risks and their interaction with performance is integrated into the quarterly monitoring report.

Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty

Corporate health PIs and key actions relating to equality and diversity issues are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Accommodation

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

A number of PIs and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

Human Rights

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable

Disability Issues

Corporate health PIs and key actions relating to accessibility issues and employees with a disability are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Appendix 2: Key to symbols used within the report

Where icons appear in this report, they have been applied to the most recently available information.

Performance Indicators:

Direction of travel

Latest reported data have improved from comparable period

GREEN

Latest reported data remain in line with comparable period

AMBER

Latest reported data have deteriorated from comparable period

RED

Performance against target

Performance better than target

Getting there - performance approaching target (within 2%)

Performance >2% behind target

Actions:

WHITE

Complete. (Action achieved by deadline/achieved ahead of deadline)

GREEN

Action on track to be achieved by the deadline

RED

Action not achieved by the deadline/unlikely to be achieved by the deadline

Benchmarking:

GREEN

Performance better than other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

AMBER

Performance in line with other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

RED

Performance worse than other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

Appendix 3: Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Table 1: Key Target Indicators

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
Altogether Better Council										
75	Percentage of calls answered within 3 minutes	78	Jul - Sept 2013	80	RED	New Indicator	NA			
76	Average waiting time at a customer access point (mins:secs)	04:00	Jul - Sept 2013	15:00	GREEN	06:40	GREEN			
77	Percentage all ICT Service Desk incidents resolved on time	90	Jul -Sept 2013	90	GREEN	95	RED			
78	Average time taken to process new housing benefit claims (days)	20.23	Jul - Sept 2013	23.0	GREEN	New Indicator	NA	32 GREEN	25 GREEN	Jan - Mar 2013
79	Average time taken to process new council tax support claims (days)	22.11	Jul - Sept 2013	23.0	GREEN	New Indicator	NA	33 GREEN	27 GREEN	Jan - Mar 2013
80	Average time taken to process change of circumstances for housing benefit support claims (days)	11.74	Jul - Sept 2013	10.7	RED	New Indicator	NA	14 GREEN	9 RED	Jan - Mar 2013
81	Average time taken to process change of circumstances for council tax support claims (days)	12.68	Jul - Sept 2013	10.7	RED	New Indicator	NA	16 GREEN	12 RED	Jan - Dec 13
82	Percentage of council tax recovered for all years excluding the current year	99	As at Sept 2013	98.5	GREEN	NA	NA			
83	Percentage of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) recovered for all years excluding the current year	99.2	As at Sept 2013	98.5	GREEN	NA	NA			

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
84	Savings delivered against the MTFP (£m)	15.7	As at Sept 2013	20.9	Not comparable [1]	NA	NA	1000 RED		
85	Percentage of council tax collected in-year	55.18	Apr-Sept 2013	57.0	RED	55.15	RED	97.4 Not comparable	96.7* Not comparable	2012/13
86	Percentage of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected in-year	60.71	Apr-Sept 2013	62.0	RED	60.25	GREEN	97.7 Not comparable	96.7* Not comparable	2012/13
87	Percentage of accounts paid to the council within 30 days (debtors)	78.1	Jul-Sept 2013	73.0	GREEN	73.21	GREEN			
88	Income generated from council owned business space (£)	1,270,980	Apr - Sept 2013	1,295,000	AMBER	1,439,000	RED			
89	Percentage of local authority tenants satisfied with landlord services (all three providers)	86	As at Apr 2013	87	AMBER	New indicator	NA			
90	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit - Dale & Valley Homes	1.64	As at Sept 2013	3.0	GREEN	2.03	GREEN			
91	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit - Durham City Homes	2.24	as at Sept 2013	2.5	GREEN	2.51	GREEN			
92	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit - East Durham Homes	2.89	As at Sept 2013	3	GREEN	2.94	GREEN			
93	Average asset rating of Display Energy Certificates (DECs) in county council buildings	98.9	As at Sept 2013	96.0	RED	98.4	RED			

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
94	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to within statutory deadlines	85	Jul - Sept 2013	85	GREEN	80	GREEN			
95	Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days to our suppliers	91.3	Jul - Sept 2013	92	AMBER	84.3	GREEN			
96	Percentage of performance appraisals completed	75.3	Oct 12 - Sept 13	80.0	RED	Not available	NA			
97	Days / shifts lost to sickness absence – all services including school staff	9.31	Oct 12 - Sept 13	9.05	RED	9.57	GREEN			

[\[1\] Annual target](#)

Table 2: Key Tracker Indicators

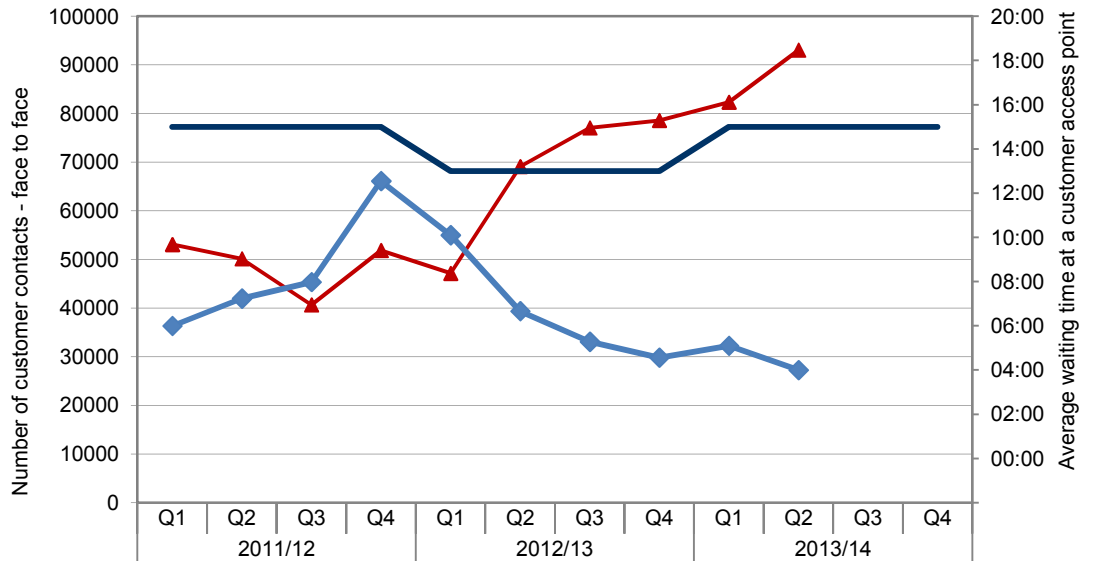
Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Previous period data	Performance compared to previous period	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
Altogether Better Council										
169	Staff aged under 25 as percentage of headcount	5.55	As at Sept 2013	5.47	NA	4.55	NA			
170	Staff aged over 50 as a percentage of headcount	36.84	As at Sept 2013	36.41	NA	36.86	NA			
171	Women in the top 5 per cent of earners	51.53	As at Sept 2013	51.60	NA	50.49	NA			
172	BME as a percentage of headcount	1.4	As at Sept 2013	1.41	NA	0.96	NA			
173	Staff with disability (DDA definition) as a percentage of headcount	2.93	As at Sept 2013	2.94	NA	3.07	NA			
174	Percentage of abandoned calls	12	Jul - Sept 2013	18	GREEN	9	RED			
175	Percentage of calls answered within 1 minute	60	Jul - Sept 2013	46	GREEN	77	RED			
176	Staff - total headcount (ONS return)	17,533	As at Sept 2013	17,546	NA	18,159	NA			
177	Staff - total full time equivalent (FTE) (ONS return)	14,198	As at Sept 2013	14,164	NA	14,682	NA			
178	Number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	27	Apr - Sept 2013	15	Not comparable [2]	36	GREEN			

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Previous period data	Performance compared to previous period	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
179	Percentage of posts with no absence (excluding SCHOOLS)	78.31	Jul - Sept 2013	77.64	GREEN	75.18	GREEN			

[\[2\] This data is cumulative and the figure is based on 12 months data for the year end so comparisons are not applicable.](#)

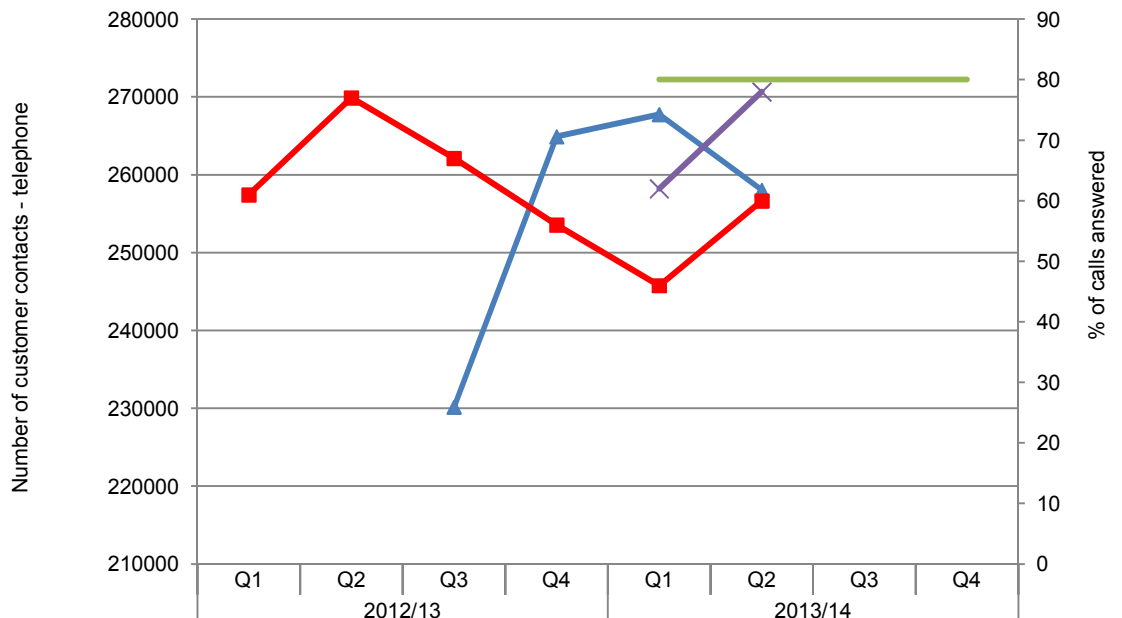
Appendix 4: Volume measures

Chart 1 – Face to face contacts



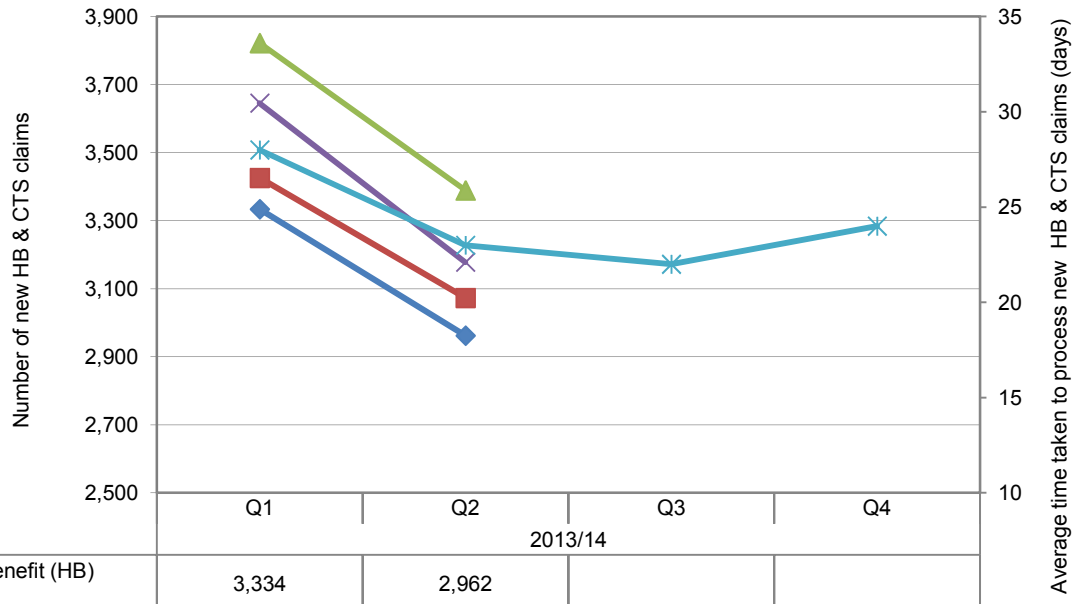
▲ Number of customer contacts - face to face	53,076	50,142	40,666	51,850	47,155	69,119	77,056	78,597	82,336	93,059		
◆ Average waiting time at a customer access point (mins:secs)	06:00	07:14	07:59	12:33	10:06	06:40	05:17	04:34	05:06	04:00		
— Target (mins:secs)	15:00	15:00	15:00	15:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	15:00	15:00	15:00	15:00

Chart 2 – Telephone calls



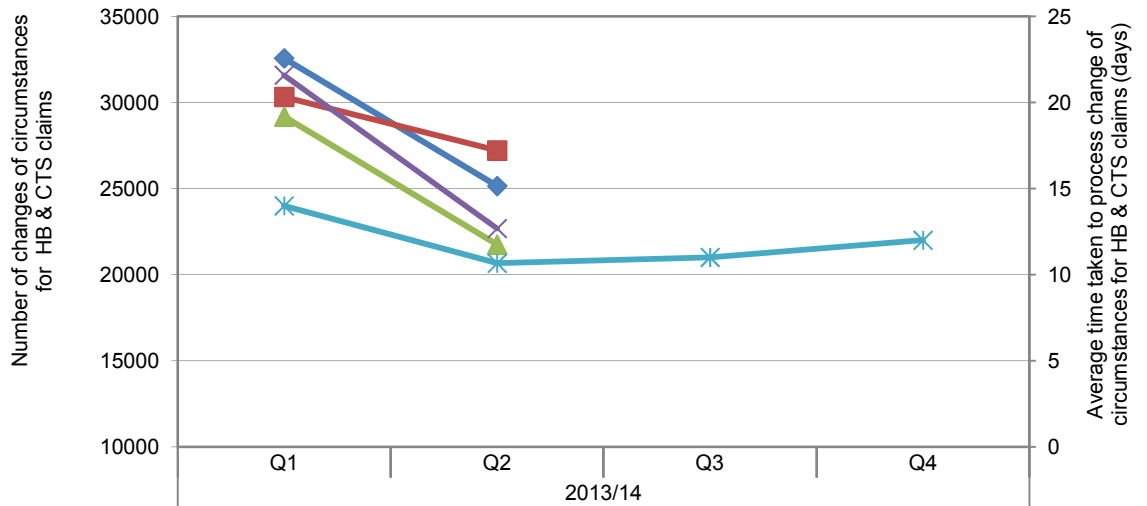
▲ Number of customer contacts - telephone			230,170	264,908	267,752	258,047		
■ Percentage of calls answered within 1 minute	61	77	67	56	46	60		
✕ Percentage of calls answered within 3 minutes					62	78		
— Target - 3 minutes (%)					80	80	80	80

Chart 3 – Benefits – new claims



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of new Housing Benefit (HB) claims	3,334	2,962		
Number of new Council Tax Support (CTS) claims	3,822	3,389		
Average time taken to process new HB claims (days)	26.53	20.23		
Average time taken to process new CTS claims (days)	30.46	22.11		
Target - discrete quarter (days)	28	23	22	24

Chart 4 – Benefits – changes of circumstances



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit (HB) claims	32,574	25,152		
Number of Changes of Circumstances for Council Tax Support (CTS) claims	30,326	27,215		
Average time taken to process change of circumstances for HB claims (days)	19.18	11.74		
Average time taken to process change of circumstances for CTS claims (days)	21.59	12.68		
Target - discrete quarter (days)	14	10.66	11	12

