

**Corporate Issues
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

28 September 2015

**Quarter 1, 2015/16
Performance Management Report**



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

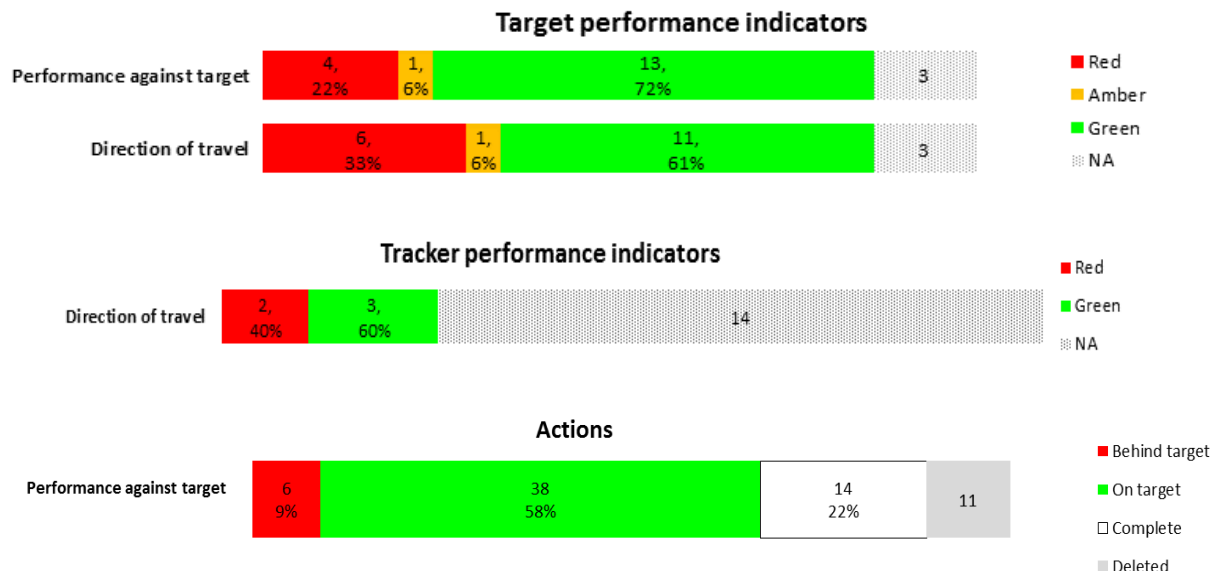
Purpose of the Report

1. To present progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators (PIs), Council Plan and service plan actions and report other performance issues for the first quarter of the 2015/16 financial year, covering the period April to June 2015.

Background

2. The report sets out an overview of performance and progress by Altogether priority 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 (see Appendix 3, table 1); 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 (see Appendix 3, table 2).
3. The report continues to incorporate a stronger focus on volume measures in our performance framework. This allows us to better quantify productivity and to monitor the effects of reductions in resources and changes in volume of activity. Charts detailing some of the key volume measures which form part of the council's corporate set of performance indicators are presented in Appendix 4.
4. The corporate performance indicator guide has been updated to provide full details of indicator definitions and data sources for the 2015/16 corporate indicator set. This is available to view either internally from the intranet (at Councillors useful links) or can be requested from the Corporate Planning and Performance Team at performance@durham.gov.uk.

Altogether Better Council: Overview



Council Performance

5. Key achievements this quarter include:

- a. During the 12 months ending June 2015, the number of telephone calls received increased from 986,641 reported at quarter one 2014/15 to 1,000,168 reported this quarter. This is an increase of almost 11,000 calls on the previous quarter (989,422 telephone calls), which can be partly attributed to additional telephone lines being added to the Automatic Call Distributor system and the transfer of Durham City Homes to the County Durham Housing Group in April 2015. 6% of telephone calls were abandoned, an improvement on the same period last year (8%) and better than the target of 12%. 92% of the telephone calls were answered within three minutes, above the target of 80%. This was an improvement on the same period last year, when 88% were answered within three minutes (Appendix 4, Chart 5).
- b. Footfall in our customer access points (CAPs) has been reducing from 263,689 during the 12 months ending June 2014 to 202,511 during the 12 months ending June 2015 (Appendix 4, Chart 6). This is due to the introduction of the appointments system, changes in reporting (including removal of library footfall from CAP figures) and improvements to the ways in which our customers access services. Noticeable decreases are evident in repeat queries for benefits and council tax, due to the new appointments system and advance notice to customers of documentation they need to bring. The Customer Relationship Management System is being reconfigured to capture accurate data in relation to the percentage of customers seen within 15 minutes at a CAP and the percentage of customers with an appointment seen on time. Data related to the customers seen at a CAP will be available by the end of quarter two.
- c. Good performance has been sustained for benefit claims processing for new claims and changes of circumstances during quarter one.
 - i. New Housing Benefit (HB) claims were processed in 22.52 days on average, within the 23 day target but 0.59 days slower than the same period last year (21.93 days). The volume of new HB claims processed

was 3,149 this quarter which was close to 3,160, the volume processed in quarter one 2014/15 (Appendix 4, Chart 1).

- ii. New Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claims were processed in 23.16 days on average, just outside the 23 day target and almost as fast as during quarter one 2014/15 (23.10 days). The volume of new CTR claims processed decreased from 3,531 in quarter one 2014/15 to 3,401 this quarter (Appendix 4, Chart 2).
- iii. Changes to HB were processed in 10.01 days on average, within the 11 day target and 0.10 days faster than during quarter one 2014/15 (10.11 days). 29,207 change of circumstances for HB claims were processed this quarter (Appendix 4, Chart 3).
- iv. Changes to CTR were processed in 8.34 days on average, within the 11 day target and 2.31 days faster than during quarter one 2014/15 (10.65 days). 40,416 change of circumstances for CTR claims were processed this quarter (Appendix 4, Chart 4).

Note: The way in which the change of circumstance is processed changed this quarter which means that some multi-changes are now counted more than once where previously it would have been counted as just one change. Data previously reported regarding volume is therefore not comparable.

The service is on track to achieve the annual target of 22 days for processing new claims and 10 days for changes of circumstances.

- d. The council tax collection rate was 28.7% which achieved target for quarter one, an improvement of 0.24% from quarter one 2014/15. The gross payments collected increased by £2.245m from £62.837m in quarter one 2014/15 to £65.082m in quarter one 2015/16.

At the end of quarter one 2015/16, there were over 2,000 additional chargeable households than at the end of quarter one 2014/15. In June 2015 alone, the number of chargeable households increased by 285. At the same time, more council tax payers opted to pay over 12 months rather than ten, impacting upon monthly cash flow.

It is encouraging to report that the percentage of council tax payers using direct debit increased from 69.96% at the end of quarter one 2014/15 to 70.50% this quarter.

- e. The collection rate for business rates was 34.4%, exceeding the 33.4% target at quarter one and improving by 3.1% from quarter one 2014/15. This improvement should be considered within the context of increased collectable debit, from £120,631,485 in June 2014 to £121,518,431 in June 2015. From a cash flow perspective, £42,125,479 was collected this quarter compared to £40,700,194 in quarter one 2014/15, an increase of £1.4m.

Since the start of quarter one 2015/16, a further 196 rate payers chose to pay over 12 months instead of 10, an increase of 13.5%, although this is unlikely to make a significant difference to in-year collection rates as the majority of major business rate payers moved to this payment group for 2014/15.

- f. During quarter one 2015/16, over 88,000 supplier invoices were paid and 93.7% of those were paid within 30 days. Performance exceeded the 92% target. This represents an improvement of 1.3% on the previous quarter and the same period last year.
- g. Progress has been made with the following Council Plan and service plan actions:
 - i. The successful roll out of the Iken software case management system in Legal Services has been achieved. This action has been completed well ahead of the original target date of March 2016.
 - ii. Good progress has been made on office accommodation work, with Cabinet agreeing in principle to progress with a new Headquarters, subject to an outline business case and receipt of an update report in November 2015, in order to make way for a strategic employment site at Aykley Heads. An approach to new ways of working for all employees, in support of the proposed office accommodation programme to move to five strategic sites across the county, is also under development.

6. The key performance improvement issues for this theme are:

- a. The employee appraisal rate was 84.5% in the 12 months to June 2015. Whilst performance improved by 0.8% on the previous quarter and by 31.5% from quarter one 2014/15, the target of 87.5% was not achieved.

Human Resources continue to work with management teams to support and encourage compliance, and individual managers continue to be prompted by automated alerts when appraisals are coming due or overdue. Heads of Service are also provided with monthly lists of their respective employees who have not had a relevant appraisal in the last rolling year.

- b. The council continues to be challenged by sickness absence levels despite significant council-wide efforts to ensure fair and consistent application of the agreed policy by managers, and proactive support to get employees back to work as soon as possible. Improving the management of attendance and reducing sickness absence continues to be a priority for the council.
 - i. The average days lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE) employee (including school based employees) for the rolling year to June 2015 was 9.97 days. The sickness levels remain higher than acceptable and outside the target of 8.5 days. The average days lost to sickness absence per FTE increased by 4.1% from quarter four 2014/15 (9.58 days) and by 11.3% from the same period last year (8.96 days).
 - ii. The average number of days lost to sickness absence per FTE (when excluding schools based employees) for the rolling year to June 2015 was 12.3 days. Whilst current levels remain better than the December 2012 peak of 12.72 days, the target of 11.5 days has not been achieved. The average days lost to sickness absence per FTE

increased by 1.3% from quarter four 2014/15 (12.14 days) and by 3.1% from the same period last year (11.93 days).

- iii. During the rolling year to June 2015, 47.5% of posts (excluding school based employees) had no sickness absence. Performance improved from quarter four 2014/15 (45%) but deteriorated from the same period last year (48.1%).
- iv. The percentage time lost to sickness absence (excluding schools) was 4.9% for the rolling year to June 2015. Performance deteriorated from quarter four 2014/15 (4.8%) and from the same period last year (4.7%).

Sickness absence is subject to a scrutiny review by the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- c. The percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests responded to within 20 days was 71% this quarter, a deterioration of two percentage points from the previous quarter (73%) and eight percentage points from quarter one 2014/15 (79%). Performance remains below the national target of 85%. The number of FOI/EIR requests was 291 this quarter, a slight increase from 283 in the same period last year but a drop from 353 in quarter four 2014/15, although the long term trend continues to increase (see Appendix 4, Chart 7). The high volume in quarter four had a clear spill over effect into quarter one performance. Performance also suffered from increased complexity of FOI requests.
- d. The key Council Plan actions which have not achieved target in this theme include:
 - i. The review of customer service standards and development of an action plan to enable the measurement of the new service standards has been rescheduled from June to October 2015. Customer service standards were approved in June 2015 and an action plan is being developed.
 - ii. Improving information governance through development of Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Information Asset Owner roles has been delayed. The target date has been revised from May 2015 to October 2015. Work continues to formalise SIRO role and responsibilities within the organisation against broader information governance work.
 - iii. The action to map information assets to identify asset owners and the risk associated with those assets has been delayed. Information asset owners are in place in Children and Adult Services, and mapping of information assets has been done by ICT. Discussions on records management responsibilities have taken place. Full completion of the action has been rescheduled from June 2015 to October 2015.
 - iv. The target date to review performance management indicators in relation to welfare reform and poverty has been rescheduled from June 2015 to October 2015. The draft Poverty Action Plan for County Durham was agreed in July. The Action Plan will be considered by

Cabinet in October, following which it is intended to undertake a consultation with other organisations and groups, including the County Durham Partnership.

- v. Delivery of a Centre for Volunteering and Social Enterprise in partnership with Durham Community Action has been rescheduled from November 2015 to January 2016 due to the delay in announcing the winners of the Transformation Challenge Award bids. The first meeting of the centre steering group was held in July 2015.

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

- a. If there was to be slippage in the delivery of the agreed Medium Term Financial Plan (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, a programme management approach for key projects has been established and embedded across the council. Monitoring by Corporate Management Team and Cabinet provides assurance over the implementation of the agreed MTFP savings projects. It should be recognised that this will be a significant risk for at least the next four years.
- b. Ongoing Government funding cuts which now extend to at least 2019/20 will continue to have an increasing major impact on all council services. Management consider it highly probable that this risk could occur, and to mitigate the risk, sound financial forecasting is in place based on thorough examination of the Government's "red book" plans. This will also be a significant risk for at least the next four years.
- c. Potential restitution of search fee income going back to 2005. The parties have now resolved the matter to their mutual satisfaction.
- d. If we were to fail to comply with Central Government's Public Services Network Code of Connection criteria for our computer applications, this would put some of our core business processes at risk, such as revenues and benefits, which rely on secure transfer of personal data. A backup ICT site is now in place. The equipment has been installed, data has been transferred, and a full test is planned once remedial electrical work is carried out at the council's primary data site. This will remain on the register as an inherent strategic risk.

Recommendations and Reasons

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

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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 Performance Indicators (PIs) has been included to monitor staffing issues.

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 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 - 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

Nearest Neighbour Benchmarking:

The nearest neighbour model was developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), one of the professional accountancy bodies in the UK. CIPFA has produced a list of 15 local authorities which Durham is statistically close to when you look at a number of characteristics. The 15 authorities that are in the nearest statistical neighbours group for Durham using the CIPFA model are: Barnsley, Wakefield, Doncaster, Rotherham, Wigan, Kirklees, St Helens, Calderdale, Dudley, Northumberland, Tameside, Sheffield, Gateshead, Stockton-on-Tees and Stoke-on-Trent.

We also use other neighbour groups to compare our performance. More detail of these can be requested from the Corporate Planning and Performance Team at performance@durham.gov.uk.

Appendix 3: Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Table 1: Key Target Indicators

Ref	PI 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											
58	NS20	Percentage of abandoned calls	6	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	12	GREEN	8	GREEN			
59	NS22	Percentage of telephone calls answered within three minutes	92	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	80	GREEN	88	GREEN			
60	NS24	Percentage of customers seen within 15 minutes at a customer access point	Reported Q2	NA	95	NA	NA	NA			
61	NS25	Percentage of customers with an appointment at a customer access point who are seen on time	Reported Q2	NA	95	NA	New indicator	NA			
62	RES/038	Percentage all ICT service desk incidents resolved on time	94	Apr - Jun 2015	90	GREEN	94	AMBER			
63	RES/NI/181a1	Average time taken to process new housing benefit claims (days)	22.52	Apr - Jun 2015	23.00	GREEN	21.93	RED	22.00 Not comparable	23** Not comparable	Jan - Mar 2015
64	RES/NI/181a2	Average time taken to process new council tax reduction claims (days)	23.16	Apr - Jun 2015	23.00	AMBER	23.10	RED			
65	RES/NI/181b1	Average time taken to process change of circumstances for housing benefit claims (days)	10.01	Apr - Jun 2015	11.00	GREEN	10.11	GREEN	5.00 Not comparable	5** Not comparable	Jan - Mar 2015
66	RES/NI/181b2	Average time taken to process change of	8.34	Apr - Jun 2015	11.00	GREEN	10.65	GREEN			

Ref	PI 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
		circumstances for council tax reduction claims (days)									
67	RES/001	Savings delivered against the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (£m)	10.6	As at Jun 2015	16.3	Not comparable [1]	14.2	NA			
68	RES/002	Percentage of council tax collected in-year	28.70	Apr - Jun 2015	28.70	GREEN	28.63	GREEN	97.00 Not comparable	95.89* Not comparable	2014/15
69	RES/003	Percentage of business rates collected in-year	34.40	Apr - Jun 2015	33.40	GREEN	33.36	GREEN	98.11 Not comparable	98* Not comparable	2014/15
70	RES/129	Percentage of council tax recovered for all years excluding the current year	98.90	Apr - Jun 2015	98.50	GREEN	98.96	RED			
71	RES/130	Percentage of business rates recovered for all years excluding the current year	99.39	Apr - Jun 2015	98.50	GREEN	99.11	GREEN			
72	REDPI49b	Total of income and savings from solar installations on council owned buildings (£)	261,210	2014/15	242,000	GREEN	214,000	GREEN			
73	REDPI68	Average asset rating of Display Energy Certificates in county council buildings	90.2	Apr - Jun 2015	97.0	GREEN	98.0	GREEN			
74	RES/LPI/010	Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days to our suppliers	93.7	Apr - Jun 2015	92.0	GREEN	92.5	GREEN			

Ref	PI 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
75	ACE006	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests responded to within statutory deadlines	71	Apr - Jun 2015	85	RED	79	RED			
76	RES/LPI/012	Days / shifts lost to sickness absence – all services including school staff	9.97	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	8.50	RED	8.96	RED			
77	RES/LPI/012a	Days / shifts lost to sickness absence – all services excluding school staff	12.30	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	11.50	RED	11.93	RED			
78	RES/011	Percentage of performance appraisals completed in current post in rolling year period (excluding schools)	84.54	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	87.50	RED	64.28	GREEN			

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

Table 2: Key Tracker Indicators

Ref	PI 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											
171	NS43a	Number of customer contacts - face to face	202,511	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	219,756	NA	263,689	NA			
172	NS43b	Number of customer contacts -telephone	1,000,168	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	989,422	NA	986,641	NA			
173	NS43c	Number of customer contacts - web forms	17,213	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	16,886	NA	18,274	NA			
174	NS43d	Number of customer contacts - emails	15,775	Apr - Jun 2015	NA	NA [2]	NA	NA [2]			
175	RES/013	Staff aged under 25 as a percentage of post count	5.54	As at Jun 2015	5.52	NA	5.47	NA			
176	RES/014	Staff aged over 50 as a percentage of post count	39.27	As at Jun 2015	38.8	NA	38.02	NA			
177	RES/LPI/011a	Women in the top five percent of earners	52.36	As at Jun 2015	52.03	NA	51.44	NA			
178	RES/LPI/011bi	Black and minority ethnic (BME) as a percentage of post count	1.53	As at Jun 2015	1.53	NA	1.47	NA			
179	RES/LPI/011ci	Staff with disability as a percentage of post count	3.99	As at Jun 2015	2.73	NA	2.79	NA			
180	RES028	Discretionary Housing Payments - value (£) for customers affected by social sector size criteria	115,924.44	Apr - Jun 2015	1,146,867.00	NA	629,272.88	NA			
181	RES029	Discretionary Housing Payments - value (£) for customers affected by local housing allowance reforms	38,091.06	Apr - Jun 2015	131,568.00	NA	62,342.77	NA			

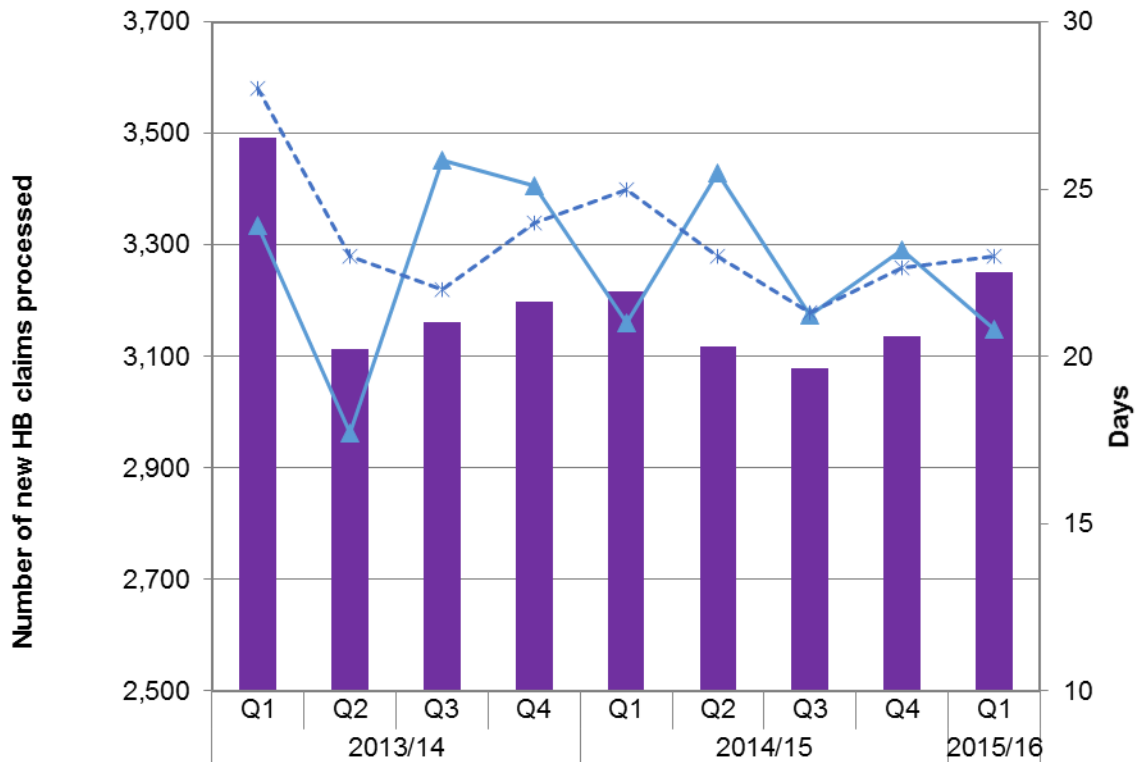
Ref	PI ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Previous period data	Performance compared to previous period	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
182	ACE016	Percentage of children in poverty (quarterly proxy measure) (Also in Altogether Better for Children and Young People)	22.7	As at Feb 2015	22.7	AMBER	23.6	GREEN	16.6	23.3*	As at Feb 2015
183	ACE017	Percentage of children in poverty (national annual measure) (Also in Altogether Better for Children and Young People)	22.7	2012	23.0	GREEN	23.0	GREEN	18.9	23.4*	2012
184	ACE019	Percentage of households that need to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel to maintain an adequate standard of warmth	17.9	2012	19.5	GREEN	19.5	GREEN	13.9	17.8*	2012
185	RES/034b	Staff - total headcount (excluding schools)	8,668	As at Jun 2015	8,954	NA	9,190	NA			
186	RES/035b	Staff - total full time equivalent (excluding schools)	7,099	As at Jun 2015	7,450	NA	7,604	NA			
187	RES/020	Percentage of time lost to sickness in rolling year (excluding schools)	4.86	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	4.8	RED	4.71	RED			
188	RES/052	Percentage of posts with no absence in rolling year (excluding schools)	47.51	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	45.02	GREEN	48.14	RED			

Ref	PI 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
189	RES/036	Number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive	14	Apr - Jun 2015	15	N/A	16	NA			

[\[2\] Due to changes to the definition data are not comparable/available](#)

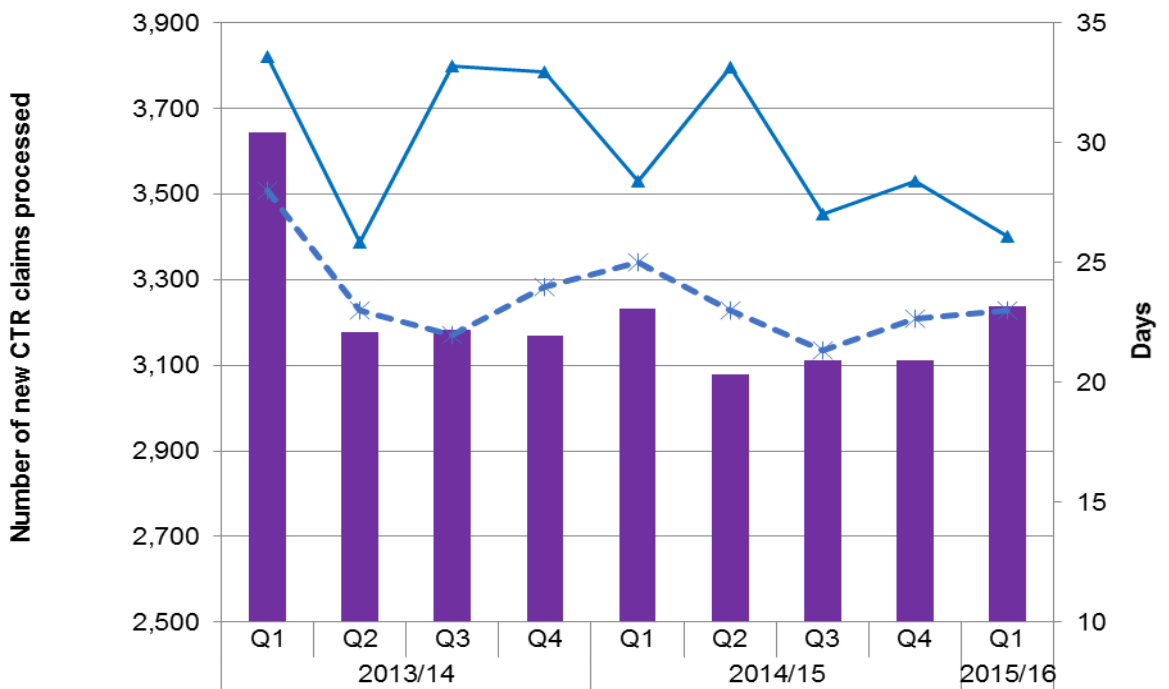
Appendix 4: Volume Measures

Chart 1 – Housing Benefits – new claims



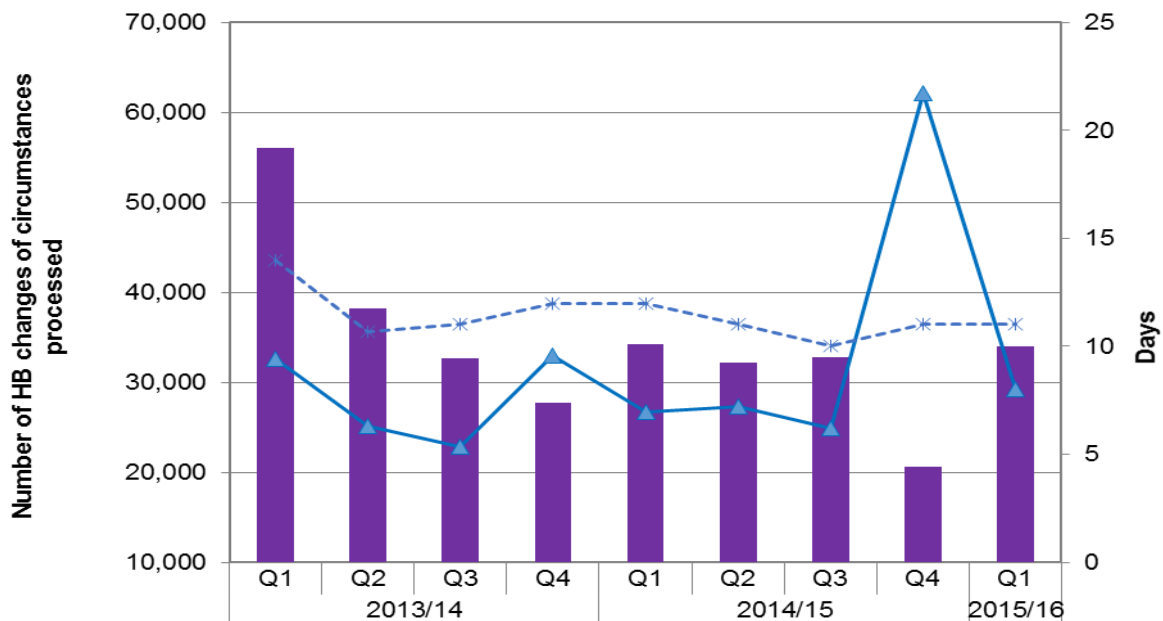
■ Average days taken to process claims	26.53	20.23	21.02	21.62	21.93	20.28	19.64	20.60	22.52
▲ Number of claims processed	3,334	2,962	3,453	3,407	3,160	3,429	3,174	3,291	3,149
-*- Target (days)	28.00	23.00	22.00	24.00	25.00	23.00	21.33	22.66	23.00

Chart 2 – Council Tax Reduction – new claims



■ Average days taken to process claims	30.46	22.11	22.18	21.93	23.1	20.31	20.90	20.93	23.16
▲ Number of claims processed	3,822	3,389	3,801	3,787	3,531	3,798	3,453	3,531	3,401
-*- Target (days)	28.00	23.00	22.00	24.00	25.00	23.00	21.33	22.66	23.00

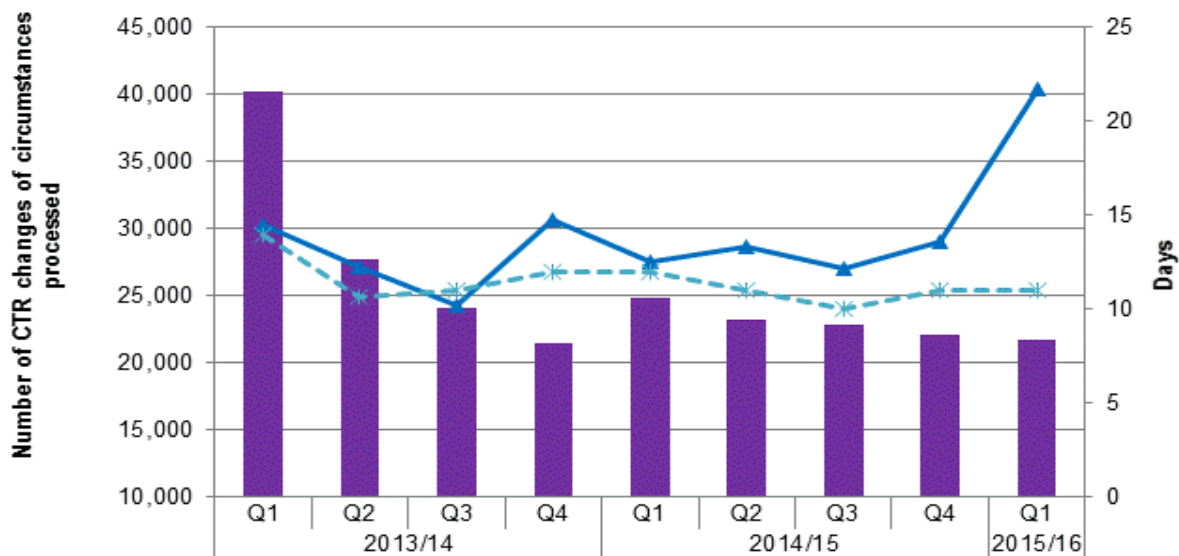
Chart 3 – Housing Benefits – changes of circumstances



Average days taken to process	19.18	11.74	9.45	7.36	10.11	9.24	9.47	4.43	10.01
Number of changes of circumstances processed	32,574	25,152	22,873	33,015	26,679	27,308	24,881	62,175	29,207
Target (days)	14.00	10.66	11.00	12.00	12.00	11.00	10.00	11.00	11.00

The way in which the change of circumstance is processed changed this quarter which means that some multi-changes are now counted more than once where previously it would have been counted as just one change. Data previously reported regarding volume is therefore not comparable.

Chart 4 – Council Tax Reduction – changes of circumstances



Average days taken to process	21.59	12.68	10.05	8.17	10.65	9.43	9.20	8.62	8.34
Number of changes of circumstances processed	30,326	27,215	24,319	30,707	27,570	28,732	27,090	29,043	40,416
Target (days)	14.00	10.66	11.00	12.00	12.00	11.00	10.00	11.00	11.00

The way in which the change of circumstance is processed changed this quarter which means that some multi-changes are now counted more than once where previously it would have been counted as just one change. Data previously reported regarding volume is therefore not comparable.

Chart 5 - Telephone calls

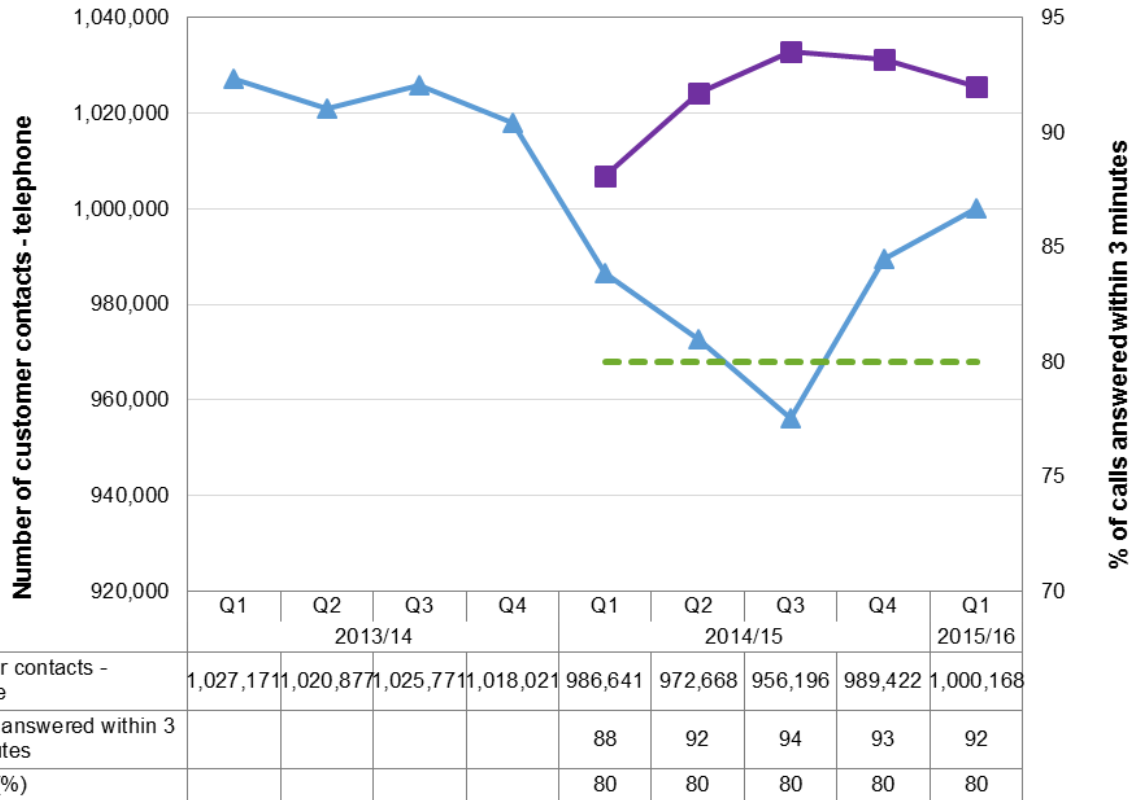


Chart 6 – Face to face contacts

