

**Corporate Issues
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

26 January 2016



**Quarter Two 2015/16
Performance Management Report**

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

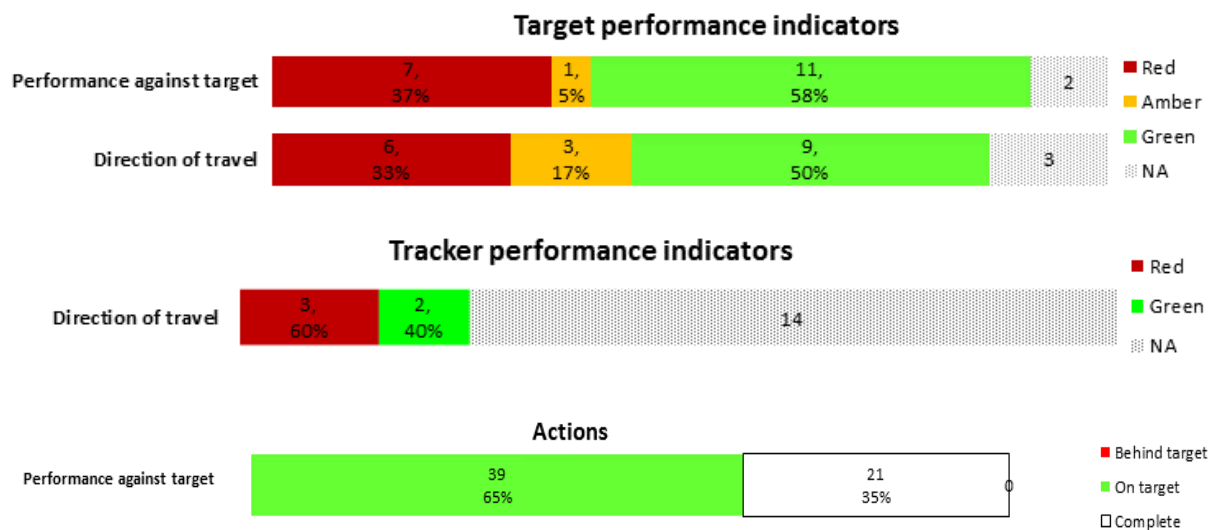
Purpose of the Report

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 second quarter of the 2015/16 financial year, covering the period July to September 2015.

Background

2. The report sets out an overview of performance and progress for the Altogether Better Council 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 provides 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 September 2015, 93% of the telephone calls were answered within three minutes, exceeding the target of 80% and improving by 1% on the same period last year (92%) and the previous quarter (92%) (Appendix 4, Chart 1). 6% of overall telephone calls were abandoned, better than the target of 12% and in line with the same period last year and the previous quarter.
- b. Footfall in our customer access points (CAPs) has been steadily falling for the past five quarters, from 263,689 during the 12 months ending June 2014 to 185,581 during the 12 months ending September 2015 (Appendix 4, Chart 2). The appointments system for benefits and council tax is reducing repeat visits as customers, at the time of booking the appointment, are informed of the documentation they need to bring with them. The current measure relating to the percentage of customers seen within 15 minutes at a CAP will continue to be reported until configuration work enables data to be provided regarding both the take up of appointments and the percentage of customers with an appointment seen on time. 99% of customers were seen within 15 minutes between July and September 2015.

The current data reported in relation to web contact captures the enquiries which are forwarded to the Customer Services Team via the contact us web enquiry form. An approach is currently being developed to enable the capture of wider online customer contact data in relation to using the web and self-service for information, payments and transactions. A fully revised measure(s) is expected to be reported as part of the year-end report. In the interim, data for quarters two and three will include the existing web forms which integrate into the Customer Relationship Management system. 15,035 of these were received between July and September 2015.

- c. During quarter two 2015/16, almost 84,000 supplier invoices were paid, 93.6% of which were paid within 30 days. Performance exceeded the 92% target, improved 4% on the same period last year (90%) and is in line with the previous quarter (93.7%). Performance exceeded the 92% target for nine of the last ten successive months.

English councils have been praised by the Forum of Private Business for paying suppliers promptly through the recession. Overall, during 2014/15 councils took an average of 16.7 days to settle bills, with 55% of suppliers paid within ten days and 92% within 30 days. Durham's year to date performance to 30 September 2015 compares favourably in both cases with 68% of suppliers paid within ten days and 94% of suppliers paid within 30 days.

Invoice payment performance is now available to all Business Intelligence users on desktops enabling each service area and individual budget holder to proactively monitor and manage it.

- d. Between April and September, 56.5% council tax was collected, exceeding the 56% target and improving by 1% from the same period last year (55.9%). Over the same period, 58.7% business rates were collected, exceeding the 58% target and improving by 1% from the same period last year (58%).
 - e. The employee appraisal rate was 88.2% in the 12 months to September 2015, an improvement on the previous quarter (84.5%) and from the same period last year (65.6%). The target, presently 87.5% was achieved for the first time. The recently sustained management effort, raised profile within management teams and automated prompts has contributed to this on target performance.
6. The key performance improvement issues for this theme are:
- a. Processing performance for housing benefit and council tax reduction claims has not achieved targets in quarter two.
 - i. New Housing Benefit (HB) claims were processed in 22.68 days on average, outside the 20.33 day target and 2.4 days slower than during quarter two 2014/15 (20.28 days). The volume of new HB claims processed decreased from 3,429 in quarter two 2014/15 to 3,056 this quarter (Appendix 4, Chart 3).
 - ii. New Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claims were processed in 23.47 days on average, outside the 20.33 day target and 3.16 days slower than during quarter two 2014/15 (20.31 days). The volume of new CTR claims processed decreased from 3,798 in quarter two 2014/15 to 3,385 this quarter (Appendix 4, Chart 4).
 - iii. Changes to HB were processed in 10.09 days on average, outside the 8.33 day target and 0.85 days slower than during quarter two 2014/15 (9.24 days). 27,126 change of circumstances for HB claims were processed this quarter (Appendix 4, Chart 5).
 - iv. Changes to CTR were processed in 9.66 days on average, outside the 8.33 day target and 0.23 days slower than during quarter two 2014/15

(9.43 days). 30,439 change of circumstances for CTR claims were processed this quarter (Appendix 4, Chart 6).

The processing performance in quarter two was impacted by officers being diverted to the administration of the welfare assistance scheme, preparations for the introduction of universal credit and processing over 400 reviews on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions each month. However, with seven new members of staff now fully trained as assessment officers (operational from October) and with the implementation of further automation to processing, we are confident that the overall target will be achieved in 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.
 - i. The average days lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE) employee (including school based employees) for the rolling year to September 2015 was 9.85 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 9.2% from the same period last year (9.02 days) but decreased by 1.2% on the previous quarter (9.97 days).
 - ii. The average number of days lost to sickness absence per FTE (when excluding schools based employees) for the rolling year to September 2015 was 12.35 days. The current levels are outside the target of 11.5 days and remain in line with the previous quarter (12.3 days). The 0.05% difference can be accounted for by a definition change to allow real time reporting which uses the number of FTE staff at the end of the reporting period, rather than those at the beginning and end of the reporting period. The number of days lost to sickness increased from the same period last year (11.97 days).
 - iii. During the rolling year to September 2015, 45.2% of posts (excluding school based employees) had no sickness absence. Performance deteriorated by 3% from the same period last year (46.6%) and by 4.8% on the previous quarter (47.5%).
 - iv. The percentage time lost to sickness absence (excluding schools) was 4.9% for the rolling year to September 2015. Performance deteriorated by 4.3% from the same period last year (4.7%) and remains in line with the previous quarter (4.9%).

The Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee has recently completed its Attendance Management Review which examined council policies and procedures for managing attendance, including the role of Occupational Health as well as key statistical information identifying trends and opportunities for improvement. The review report sets out the key findings and makes a series of recommendations aimed at delivering improved performance in terms of attendance and staff wellbeing. The report was considered by Cabinet on 16 December 2015.

- c. The percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests responded to within 20 days was 82% this quarter, an improvement of 11 percentage points from the previous quarter (71%) and three percentage points from the same period last year (79%). Performance remains below the national target of 85%. The number of FOI/EIR requests was 322 this quarter, an increase from 283 in the previous quarter and from 313 in quarter two 2014/15 (see Appendix 4, Chart 7).
 - d. There are no key Council Plan actions which have not achieved target in this theme.
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. 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. The Government set criteria for the Public Services Network Code of Connection compliance has changed again, one of the requirements being the need to submit a risk register. A meeting has been arranged between the Risk Officer and ICT to commence work on compiling the register to comply with the Public Services Network Code of Connection format.

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											
56	NS20	Percentage of abandoned calls	6	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	12	GREEN	6	AMBER			
57	NS22	Percentage of telephone calls answered within three minutes	93	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	80	GREEN	92	GREEN			
58	NS24	Percentage of customers seen within 15 minutes at a customer access point	99	Jul - Sep 2015	95	GREEN	NA	NA			
59	NS25	Percentage of customers with an appointment at a customer access point who are seen on time	Indicator under development	NA	95	NA	NA	NA			
60	RES/038	Percentage all ICT service desk incidents resolved on time	94	Jul - Sep 2015	90	GREEN	94	AMBER			
61	RES/NI/181a1	Average time taken to process new housing benefit claims (days)	22.68	Jul - Sep 2015	20.33	RED	20.28	RED	24.00 Not comparable	26** Not comparable	Apr - Jun 2015
62	RES/NI/181a2	Average time taken to process new council tax reduction claims (days)	23.47	Jul - Sep 2015	20.33	RED	20.31	RED			
63	RES/NI/181b1	Average time taken to process change of circumstances for housing benefit claims (days)	10.09	Jul - Sep 2015	8.33	RED	9.24	RED	9.00 Not comparable	10** Not comparable	Apr - Jun 2015

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
64	RES/NI/18 1b2	Average time taken to process change of circumstances for council tax reduction claims (days)	9.66	Jul - Sep 2015	8.33	RED	9.43	RED			
65	RES/001	Savings delivered against the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (£m)	14.1	As at Sep 2015	16.3	Not comparable [5]	18.9	NA			
66	RES/002	Percentage of council tax collected in-year	56.47	Apr - Sep 2015	56.00	GREEN	55.91	GREEN	97.00 Not comparable	95.89* Not comparable	2014/15
67	RES/003	Percentage of business rates collected in-year	58.65	Apr - Sep 2015	58.00	GREEN	58.00	GREEN	98.11 Not comparable	98* Not comparable	2014/15
68	RES/129	Percentage of council tax recovered for all years excluding the current year	99.02	Jul - Sep 2015	98.50	GREEN	99.02	AMBER			
69	RES/130	Percentage of business rates recovered for all years excluding the current year	99.45	Jul - Sep 2015	98.50	GREEN	99.15	GREEN			
70	REDPI49b	Total of income and savings from solar installations on council owned buildings (£)	261,210	2014/15	242,000	GREEN	214,000	GREEN			
71	REDPI68	Average asset rating of Display Energy Certificates in county council buildings	98.0	Jul - Sep 2015	97.0	AMBER	99.4	GREEN			
72	RES/LPI/0 10	Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days to our suppliers	93.6	Jul - Sep 2015	92.0	GREEN	90.0	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
73	ACE006	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests responded to within statutory deadlines	82	Jul - Sep 2015	85	RED	79	GREEN			
74	RES/LPI/012	Days / shifts lost to sickness absence – all services including school staff	9.85	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	8.50	RED	9.02	RED			
75	RES/LPI/012a	Days / shifts lost to sickness absence – all services excluding school staff	12.35	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	11.50	RED	11.97	RED			
76	RES/011	Percentage of performance appraisals completed in current post in rolling year period (excluding schools)	88.16	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	87.50	GREEN	65.64	GREEN			

[\[5\] 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											
172	NS43a	Number of customer contacts - face to face	185,581	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	202,511	Not comparable [1]	250,583	Not comparable [1]			
173	NS43b	Number of customer contacts -telephone	1,004,186	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	1,004,109	NA	976,609	NA			
174	NS43c	Number of customer contacts - web forms	17,213	Jul 2014 - Jun 2015	16,886	NA	18,274	NA			
175	NS43d	Number of customer contacts - emails	27,127	Apr - Sep 2015	15,775	NA [1]	NA	NA [1]			
176	RES/013	Staff aged under 25 as a percentage of post count	5.06	As at Sep 2015	5.54	NA	5.63	NA			
177	RES/014	Staff aged over 50 as a percentage of post count	40.16	As at Sep 2015	39.27	NA	38.16	NA			
178	RES/LPI/011a	Women in the top five percent of earners	52.72	As at Sep 2015	52.36	NA	52.30	NA			
179	RES/LPI/011bi	Black and minority ethnic (BME) as a percentage of post count	1.54	As at Sep 2015	1.53	NA	1.53	NA			
180	RES/LPI/011ci	Staff with a recorded disability as a percentage of post count	2.82	As at Sep 2015	2.97	NA	2.75	NA			
181	RES028	Discretionary Housing Payments - value (£) for customers affected by social sector size criteria	286,199.40	Apr - Sep 2015	123,019.79	NA	628,656.36	NA			
		Discretionary Housing Payments - value (£) for	75,008.48	Apr - Sep 2015	38,091.06	NA	84,430.00	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
		customers affected by local housing allowance reforms									
183	ACE016	Percentage of children in poverty (quarterly proxy measure) (Also in Altogether Better for Children and Young People)	22.5	As at May 2015	22.7	AMBER	23.3	GREEN	16.3	23.0*	As at May 2015
184	ACE017	Percentage of children in poverty (national annual measure) (Also in Altogether Better for Children and Young People)	22.5	2013	22.6	GREEN	22.6	GREEN	18.6	23.3*	2013
185	ACE019 a	Proportion of Households in Fuel Poverty (Low Income/High Cost rule)	11.5	2013	11.4	RED	11.4	RED	10.4	11.8*	2013
186	RES/034 b	Staff - total headcount (excluding schools)	8,569	As at Sep 2015	8,668	NA	9,033	NA			
187	RES/035 b	Staff - total full time equivalent (excluding schools)	7,086	As at Sep 2015	7,099	NA	7,518	NA			
188	RES/020	Percentage of time lost to sickness in rolling year (excluding schools)	4.88	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	4.86	RED	4.73	RED			
189	RES/052	Percentage of posts with no absence in rolling year (excluding schools)	45.22	Oct 2014 - Sep 2015	47.51	RED	46.58	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
190	RES/036	Number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	5	Jul - Sep 2015	16	N/A	18	NA			

[\[1\] Due to changes to the definition data are not comparable/available](#)

Appendix 4: Volume Measures

Chart 1 - Telephone calls

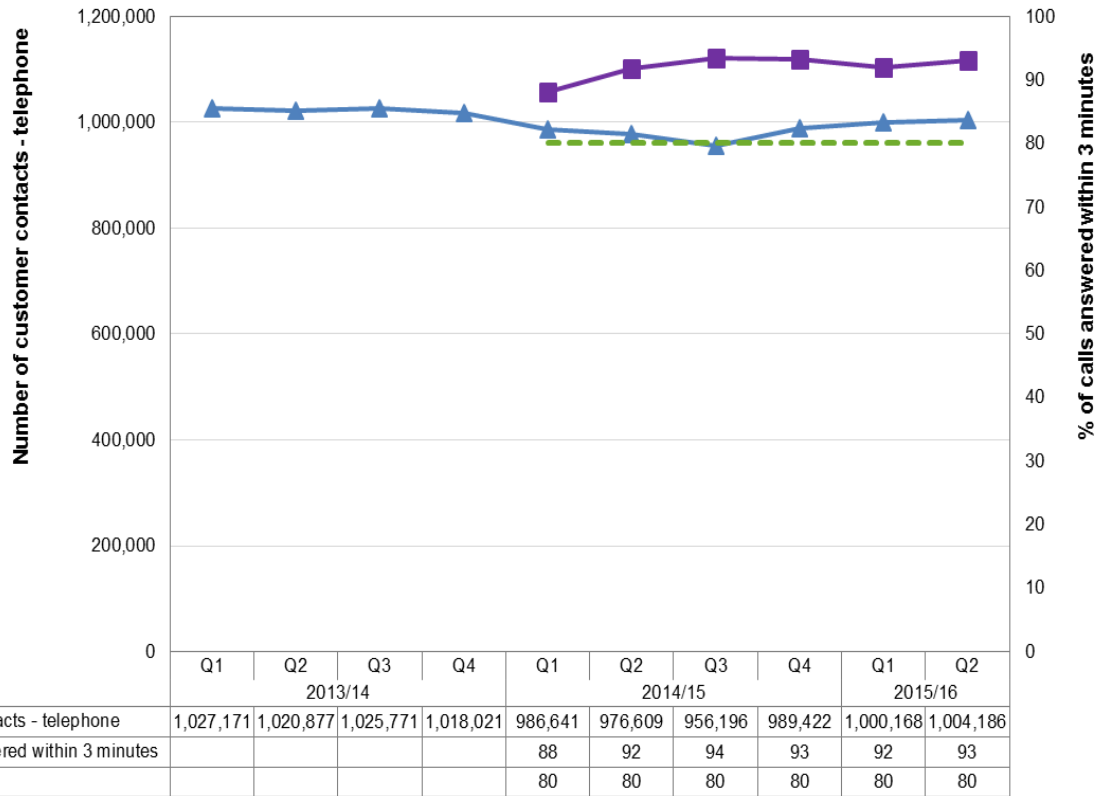


Chart 2 – Face to face contacts

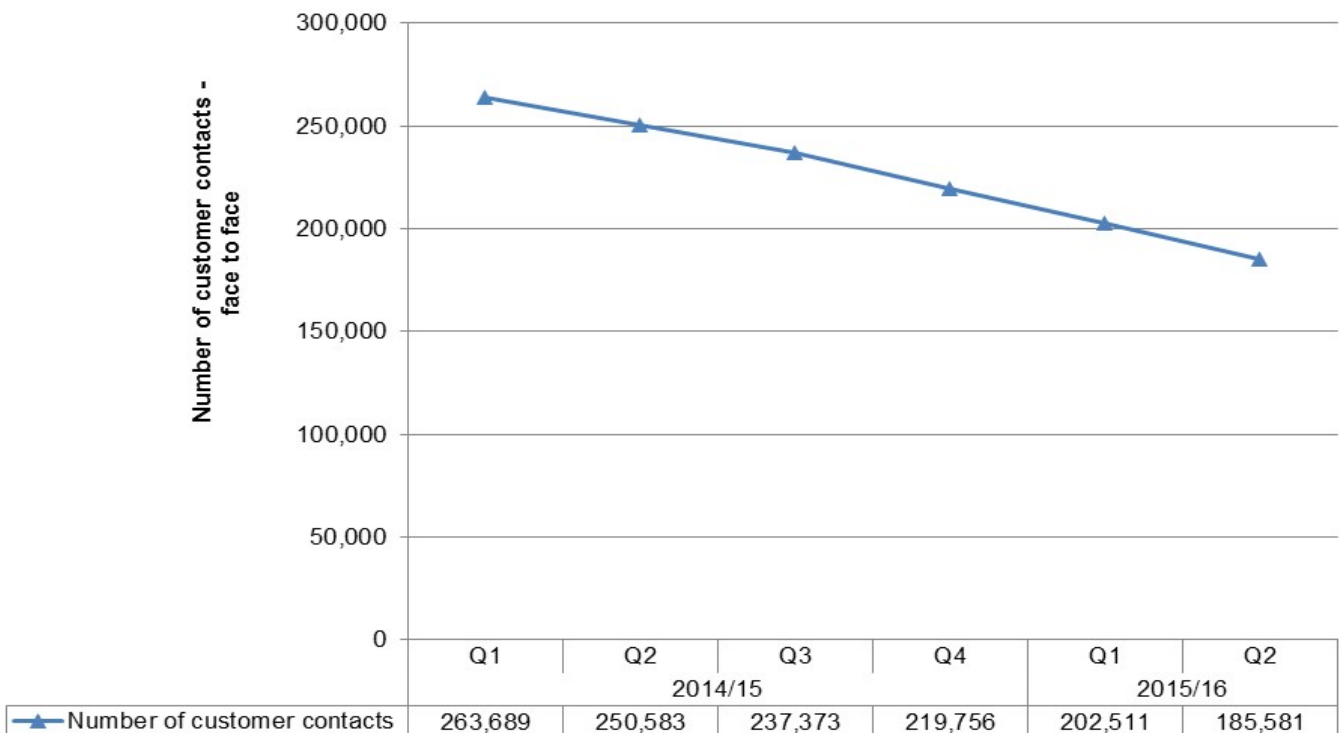


Chart 3 – Housing Benefits – new claims

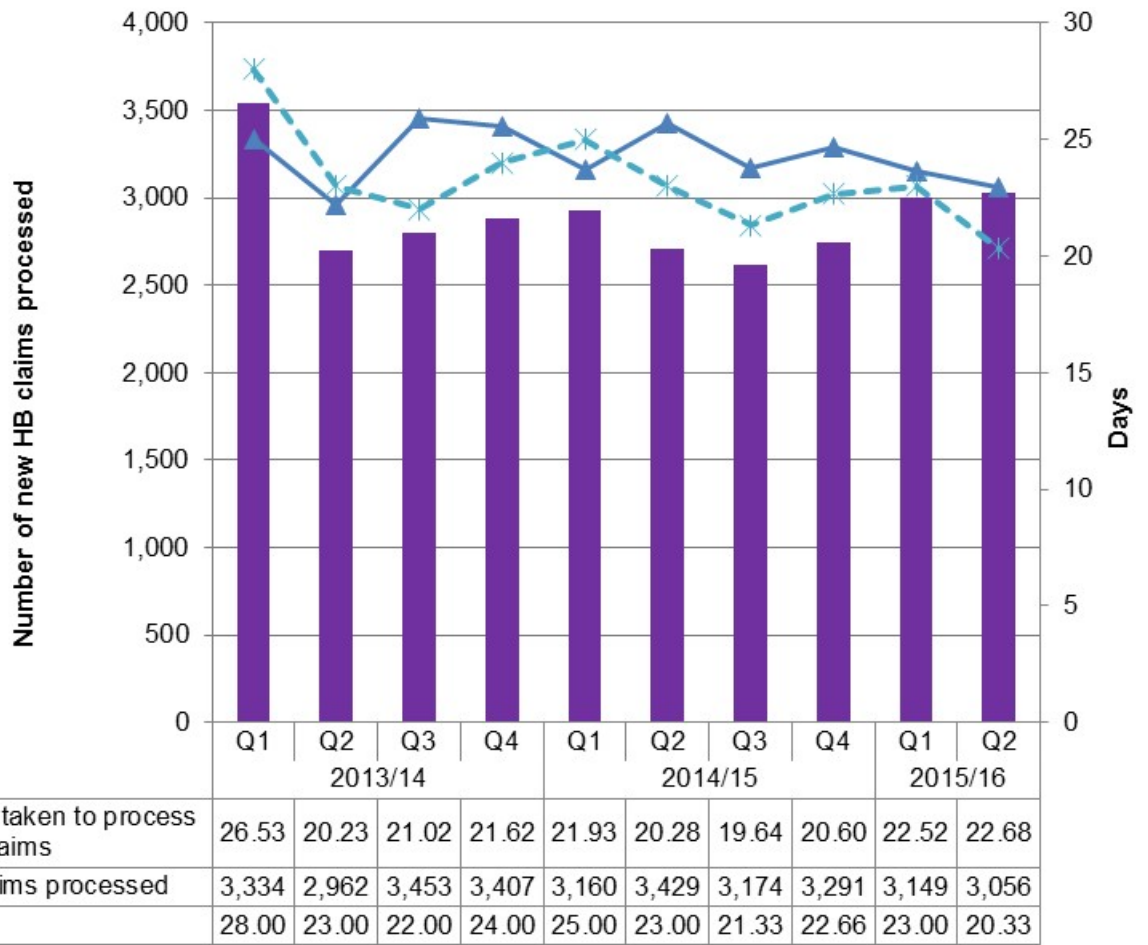


Chart 4 – Council Tax Reduction – new claims

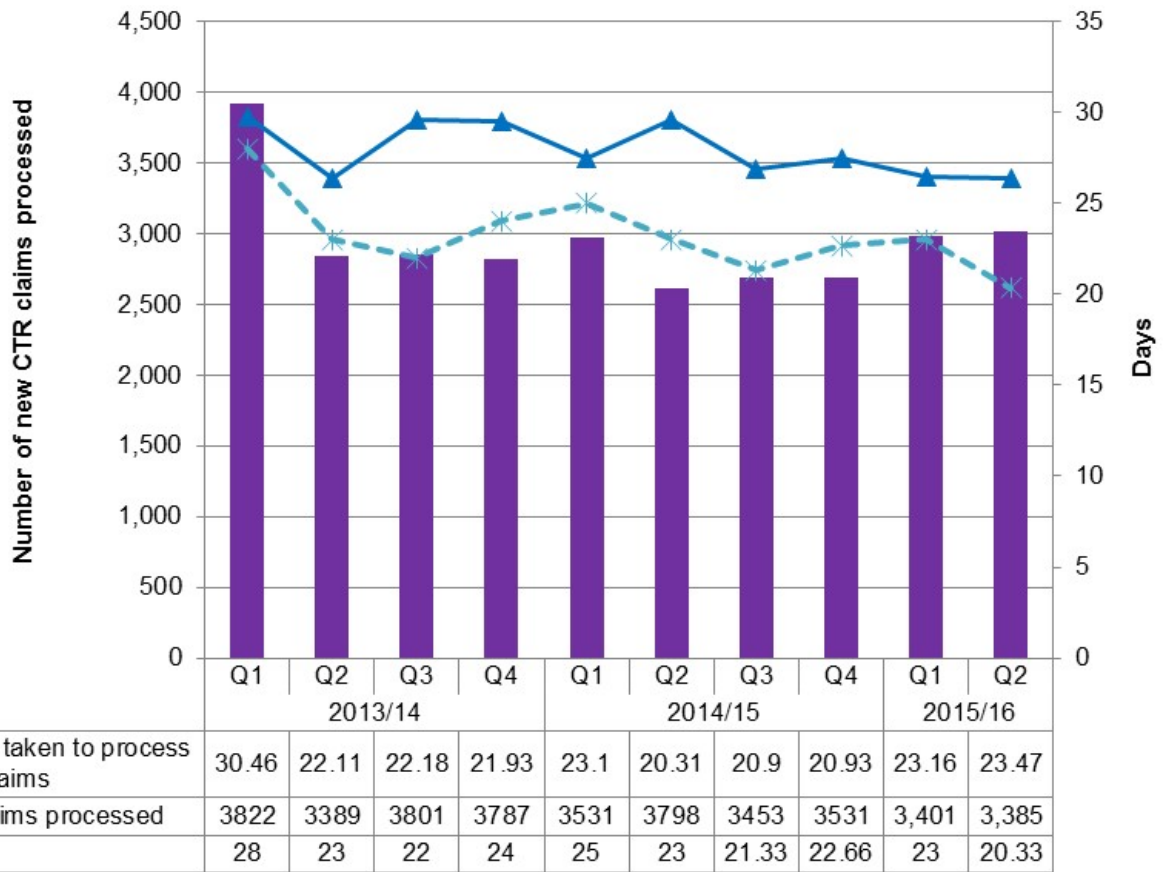
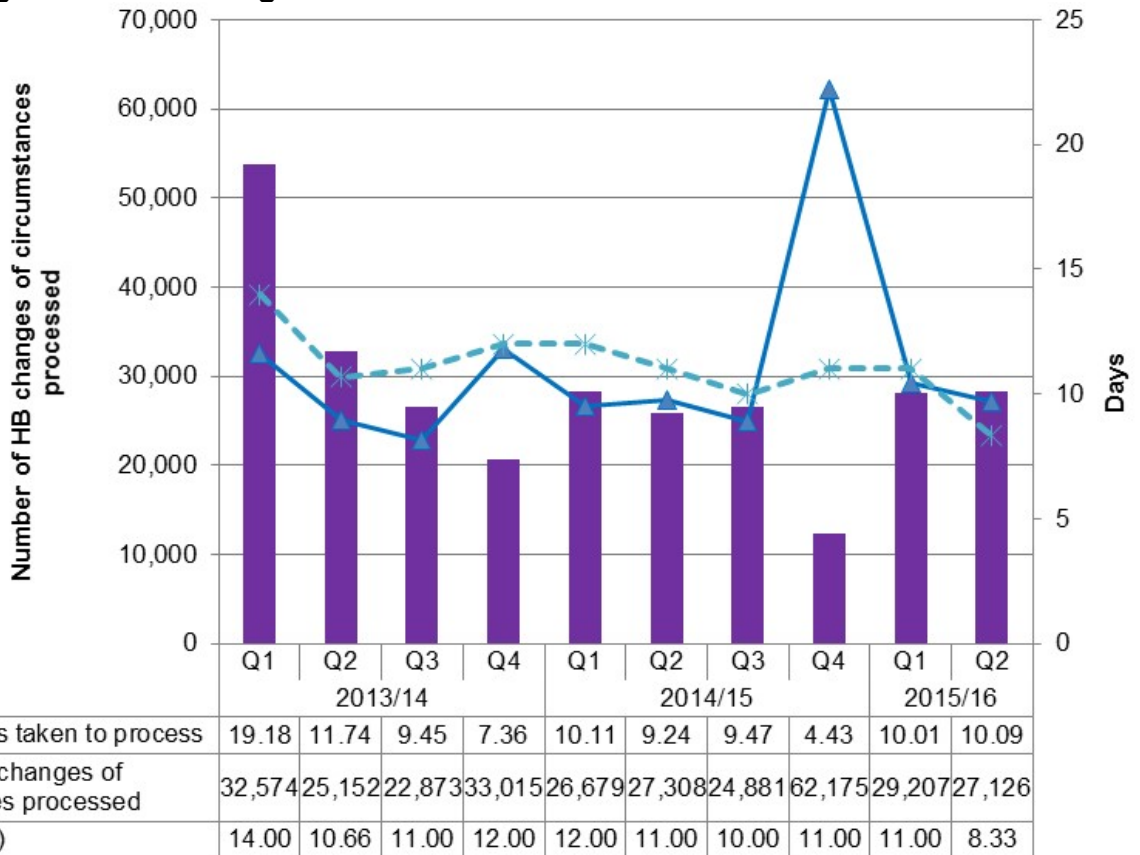


Chart 5 – Housing Benefits – changes of circumstances



The way in which the change of circumstance is processed changed in quarter one 2015/16, which means that some multi-changes are now counted more than once where previously it would have been counted as just one change. Volume data for 2015/16 is therefore not comparable with previous data.

Chart 6 – Council Tax Reduction – changes of circumstances

