

WANDSWORTH COUNCIL – HOUSING & REGENERATION DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL AREA HOUSING PANEL PERFORMANCE REPORT

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 1st APRIL 2020 TO 31st MARCH 2021

AREA HOUSING PANELS – OCTOBER 2021

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CONTEXT INFORMATION

This report contains information on the performance of the housing management area teams and contractors under their control. Also, where information is available, comparisons with other London councils are shown. Due to the timing of the publication of this comparative data, the information relates to 2019/20. This report provides detail on Key Performance Indicators to all area housing panel members to enable them to review and scrutinise the housing management service. If you are unable to attend the area housing panel meeting at which this document will be discussed, please make any comments you wish to make to your area housing manager or alternatively e-mail hms@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk.

The area housing manager will briefly introduce the report at the meeting and will be available to respond to any questions the residents' representatives may have. If the area housing manager cannot deal with the question in the meeting he/she will ensure that a response will be provided when the minutes are circulated.

The figures below relate to council tenants and leaseholders (excluding freeholders) managed by the area teams and resident management organisations (RMOs) as at 1st April 2020.

Residential properties managed by area housing team:

	Tenanted	Leasehold	Total	Percentage of stock
Central	3,532	4,104	7,636	25.8%
Eastern	4,401	3,141	7,542	25.5%
Southern	3,305	3,851	7,156	24.2%
Western	4,049	3,182	7,231	24.5%
Total	15,287	14,278	29,565	100%
	51.7%	48.3%	100%	100%

Residential properties managed by resident management organisations (RMOs)

	Tenanted	Leasehold	Total	Area Team
All Saints Coop (est 1979)	23	26	49	Southern
Convent Coop (est 1984)	34	61	95	Central
Felsham Road (est 1985)	46	42	88	Western
Chatham Coop (est 1989)	2	15	17	Southern
Totteridge Coop (est 1991)	103	35	138	Central
Wimbledon Park Coop (est 1992)	47	232	279	Western
Goulden House Coop (est 1992)	41	228	269	Southern
Carey Gardens Coop (est 1993)	224	174	398	Eastern
Patmore Coop (est 1994)	578	276	854	Eastern
Ackroydon East TMO (est 1999)	128	146	274	Western
Battersea Fields RMO (est 2002)	339	171	510	Central
McCarthy Court RMO (est 2005)	38	40	78	Southern
RMOs Total	1,603	1,446	3,049	
Grand Total	16,890	15,724	32,614	

COVID-19: Impact on Housing Management

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected services across the Council including housing management. Although efforts have been made to limit disruption, with essential services continuing, restrictions were put in place to minimise the spread of the virus, which impacted which services were delivered and how, with most staff working from home.

In line with Government guidance, the Department was carrying out only essential, emergency repairs throughout quarter 1 and part of quarter 2, and a reduced number of non-urgent repairs. The emergency repairs included those where there was serious leaks/flooding, loss of power, dangerous or insecure front entrance doors or windows and anything else which represented an immediate health or security risk. Non-urgent routine repairs were raised only where the resident and the contractor were in agreement and PPE guidance was followed, as set out in Government guidance. If the resident was shielding, non-urgent routine repairs were not permitted. Annual gas servicing continued. Visits by officers were avoided unless absolutely necessary with repairs raised using information provided by telephone calls, emails and photos. Contractors attending to carry out repairs were subject to their company's risk assessments which reflected Government guidance for operatives. Part way through quarter 2, in line with the easing of lockdown restrictions, Government guidance was refreshed and all routine, non-essential repairs and visits were permitted. However, during the third national lockdown which started on the 5th January 2021, the number of non-urgent repairs reduced again and this remained the case until the end of the financial year.

With a reduction in the Council services, the vacancy turnaround time was also impacted during quarter 1, and this was due to a combination of supply shortages affecting necessary works to vacant properties and restrictions on viewing and house moves. However, the Department has responded well to the initial challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, and the void turnaround figure saw a significant improvement during quarter 2 and 3, albeit the impact of the third national lockdown in January 2021 impacted the turnaround time in quarter 4. With the easing of lockdown restrictions, the turnaround time is expected to improve in 2021/22.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 introduced measures to ensure no-one lost their home as a result of the pandemic by suspending all eviction proceedings, which remained in place throughout 2020/21. Only in exceptional cases could an eviction take place, which included evictions for antisocial behaviour and tenants having 6 months rent arrears. For this reason, the number of possession orders issued, and evictions undertaken for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 20/21 were very low with only 1 eviction being enforced, and the occupant had already vacated the property when the eviction was carried out.

Due to the challenges the Council faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council was not rated against targets during 2020/21.

STOCK CONDITION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Proportion and number of homes non-decent (not meeting the Decent Homes Standard)

Target for 2020/21: All tenanted properties to maintain the Decent Homes Standard

The council met the Decent Homes Standard in 2007/08 and continues to ensure that properties do not become non-decent. Where tenants have refused to have the planned decent homes work installed, the home can remain below the standard until the property is vacated, at which point the necessary work can be undertaken. Whilst the home is occupied it is not counted as non-decent for reporting purposes (Communities and Local Government guidance). The exception to this is where works are required to maintain the structural integrity of the dwelling or prevent other components within the dwelling from deteriorating, or where there is a hazard that must receive early attention. These dwellings are counted as non-decent.

The Decent Homes Standard has four criteria, which are:

1. It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (i.e. the dwelling should be free of Health and Safety hazards)
2. It is in a reasonable* state of repair
3. It has reasonably* modern facilities and services
4. It provides a reasonable* degree of thermal comfort.

* “Reasonable” as defined in the Decent Homes guidance

	Central	Eastern	Southern	Western	Grand Total
No. of properties where tenants have refused works at 01/04/2020	17	12	42	10	81
Proportion of properties where tenants have refused works at 01/04/2020	0.48%	0.27%	1.27%	0.25%	0.52%

The Council has continued to achieve 100% compliance with the Decent Homes Standard where access to the properties has been allowed.

Average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) Rating - How are we performing compared to others?

SAP is a measure of overall energy efficiency and depends on both the heat loss from the dwelling and performance of the heating system. This is an annual average figure and it is not possible to provide a further break down by quarter or area team. The SAP rating index uses the letters A to G, where ‘A’ indicates the most efficient properties. For the eighth consecutive year, Wandsworth scored a “C”, which was the joint-highest score achieved by any London Borough.

COST OF MANAGING AND MAINTAINING COUNCIL PROPERTIES

This data relates only to tenanted properties and is no longer collected centrally for all local authorities so comparative data is not available. The forecasts for 2020/21 are based on the trend from previous years and projected inflation.

Average Cost of Management

Average weekly cost of management per unit is defined as the cost to the local authority of housing management. It is measured by the Housing Revenue Account expenditure on management over the year less the income generated from unpooled charges for services not otherwise covered by management and maintenance allowances, divided by the average number of dwellings in the HRA at the start and end of year, divided by 52. Unpooled charges refer to services which are charged back to the tenant and are not covered by management and maintenance allowances.

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Av. weekly management cost	£18.94	£19.13	£19.01	£20.58	£20.90

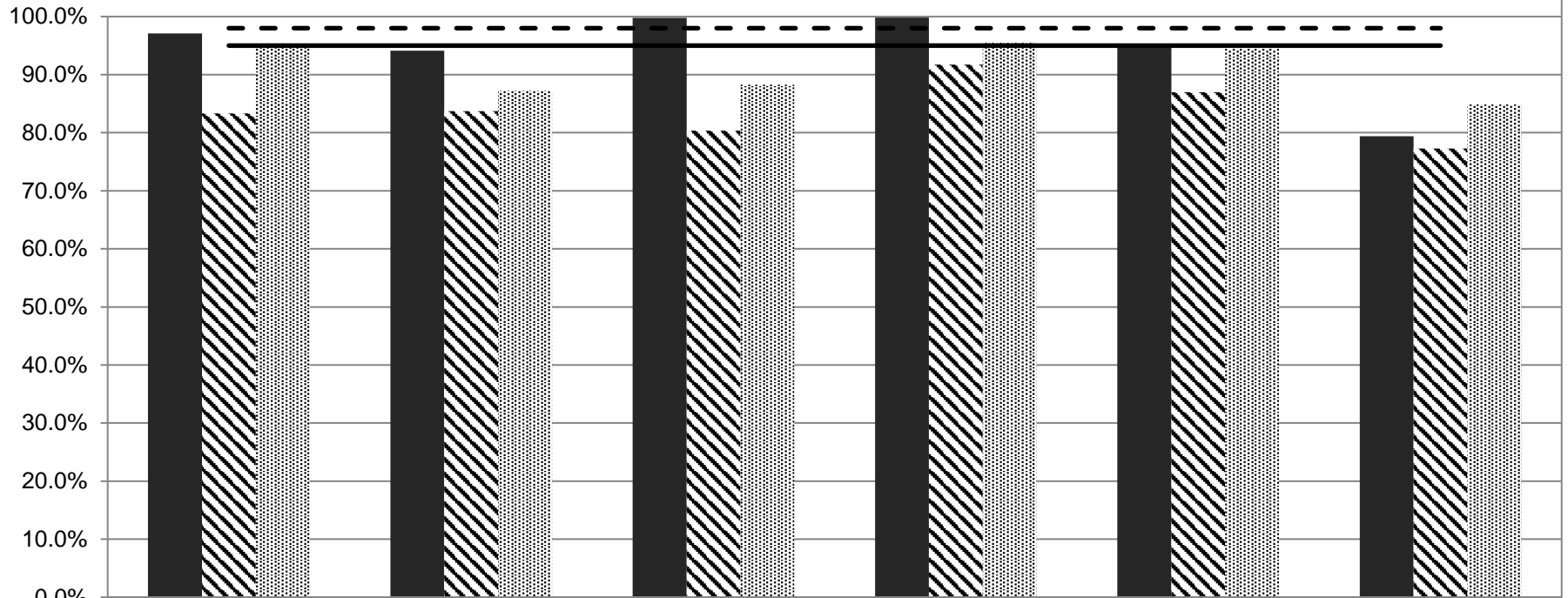
Average Cost of Maintenance

Average weekly cost of maintenance per unit is defined as the cost to the local authority of repairs and is measured by the Housing Revenue Account expenditure on repairs over the year divided by the average number of dwellings in the HRA at the start and end of the year, divided by 52.

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Av. weekly maintenance cost	£27.67	£28.84	£32.46	£30.16	£30.64

REPAIRS

Graph 1: Repairs completed within target



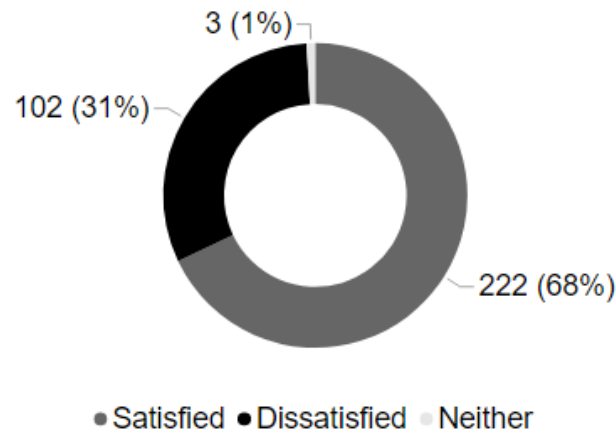
Emergency	97.1%	94.1%	99.8%	99.8%	95.0%	79.4%
Non-urgent	83.3%	83.7%	80.4%	91.7%	87.0%	77.3%
Urgent	95.4%	87.2%	88.3%	95.5%	94.4%	84.8%
Emergency Repairs Target	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Overall Repairs Target	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Average - 2020/21	87.7%	85.5%	82.7%	93.3%	90.8%	78.1%
Average - 2019/20	82.9%	90.2%	78.3%	93.2%	91.7%	80.7%
No. of Jobs - 2020/21	7,695	8,879	7,518	7,982	10,355	8,771
No. of Jobs - 2019/20	8,735	9,808	8,515	9,662	13,026	10,723

Direction of travel	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓
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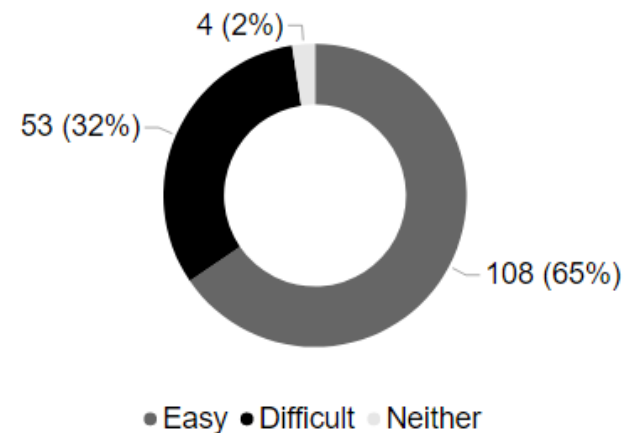
Repairs: Tenant Satisfaction

A transactional survey measuring repairs satisfaction began in February 2021, where tenants who have a repair completed within their home are sent a text message to complete a short satisfaction survey about their experience of the repairs service on that occasion. Satisfaction with all repairs for both tenants and leaseholders is also asked through the Housing Link STAR Lite survey carried out annually. The transactional survey and the following indicators are as of this calendar year, so comparison data from previous years are not available. The following two graphs display tenant satisfaction on Council repair completions between February 2021 to April 2021:

Graph 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the repairs service you received on this occasion?



Graph 3: How easy or difficult was it to get your repair completed?



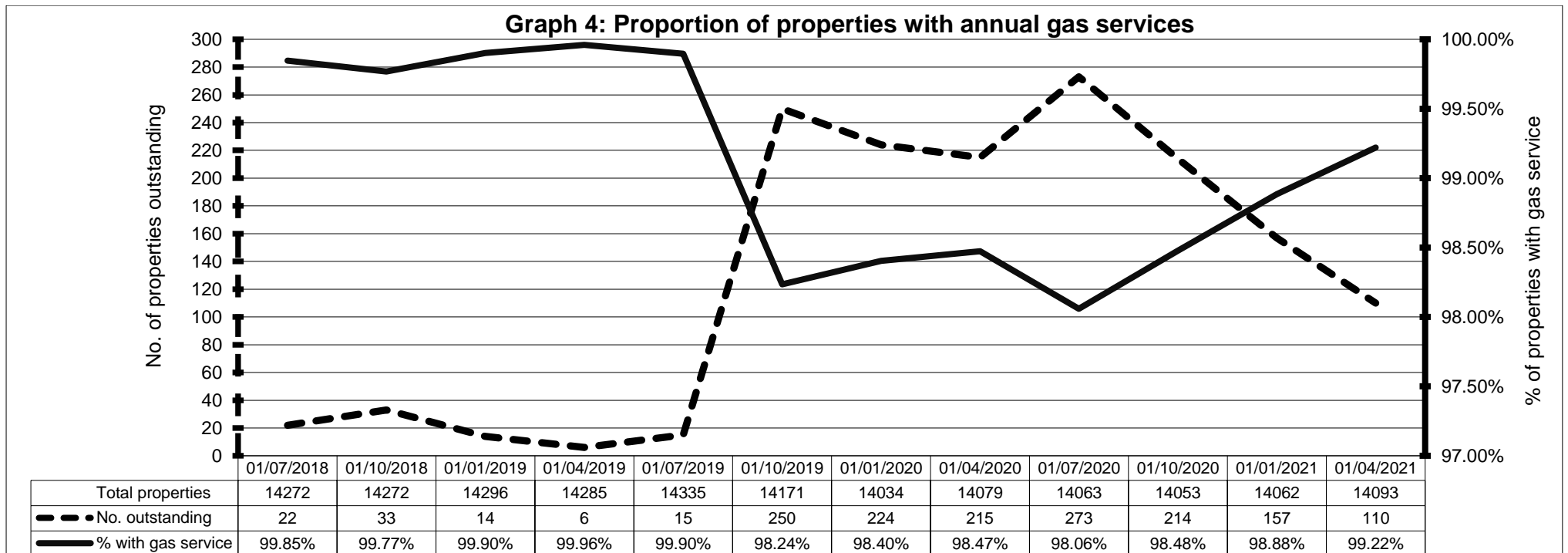
Although essential services have been maintained throughout the pandemic, the national lockdown announced in January 2021 did have an impact on the Department's non-urgent repairs service, since the Department had to allow more time for non-urgent repairs to be completed and this impact is likely to have affected satisfaction scores; it is evident that satisfaction with housing services is related to the speed at which the Department can respond to repair requests. With the easing of lockdown measures, the number of repair orders are likely to increase, and contractors will be in a better position to complete repair orders at a faster rate. With the introduction of transactional surveying, the Department is able to obtain a real time satisfaction level for the repairs service which will enable the Department to identify trends and any issues as they arise to further improve tenant satisfaction.

Proportion of gas service certificates outstanding

Target for 2020/21: 100% of tenanted properties with a gas service at 1st April 2021

A landlord safety certificate is a legal requirement and all homes with gas appliances should be checked yearly by a HomeSafe registered engineer who will undertake repair work and issue a gas safety certificate. Landlords should ensure that their tenants get a copy of the gas safety certificate within 28 days of the gas check, or, if new tenants, when they move in. The proportion of gas safety certificates outstanding (i.e. those that are older than 12 months) is expressed as a percentage of the total number of properties in the Housing Revenue Account that require a gas servicing certificate.

As at 1st April 2021, 110 properties out of 14,093 had a last recorded gas service that was more than 12 months ago. This represents 0.78% of properties with an outstanding gas service. The number of completed gas services did slightly reduce during the first national lockdown in Q1 2020/21 which created a backlog; this was mostly due to contractors having access issues due to tenants’ requirements to self-isolate. However, throughout 2020/21 the backlog has been decreasing with more properties receiving recorded gas services. The service continues to work to ensure that the number of properties with an outstanding gas service is kept to an absolute minimum with proactive action being taken as required to gain entry to properties to undertake servicing.



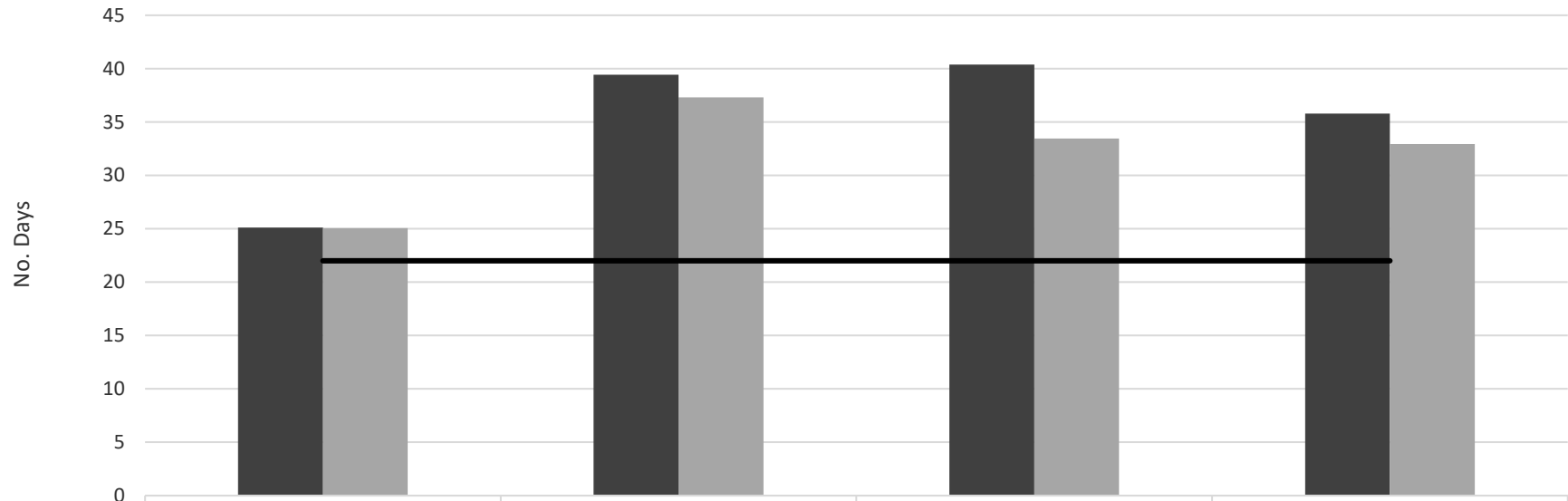
VOID PROPERTIES

Vacancy Turnaround Times

Target for 2020/21: 22 days

The Council has set this target as the maximum time between the vacation of a property and it being re-let. The period includes the time taken for the area team to make the property available for occupation (i.e. carrying out repairs, lock changes, etc.) and the time taken by lettings from finding a suitable tenant to tenancy commencement. These figures exclude properties let through mutual exchanges or which the Council intends to sell or demolish.

Graph 5: Void turnaround time by Area Team



	Central	Eastern	Southern	Western
■ Average - 2020/21	25.11	39.42	40.37	35.78
■ Average - 2019/20	25.06	37.31	33.45	32.93
— Target	22	22	22	22
No of Properties - 2020/21	94	120	88	114
No of Properties - 2019/20	117	219	134	175

Direction of travel	↓	↓	↓	↓
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Percentage of Rent Lost Through Vacants

How are we performing locally?

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	2017/18 *	2018/19 *	2019/20	2020/21
% rent lost through Council homes being empty	2.16%	1.18%	1.69%	2.01%
Total rent lost through vacants (in £s)	1,028,215.00	1,320,077.86	1,904,104.47	2,313,759.63

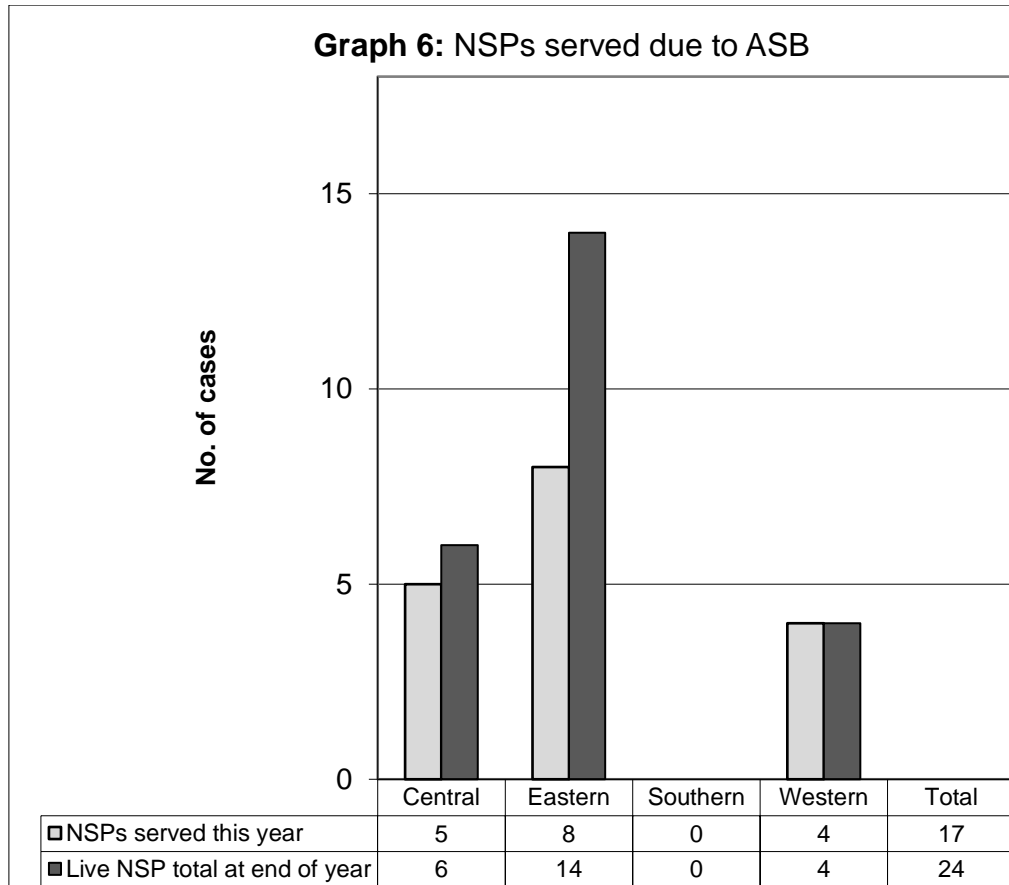
The Council has improved its performance since 2017/18 and has seen a slight decline when compared to 2018/19. The reason for the slight drop in performance was due to new properties being added in 2019/20, including new blocks. 2019/20 also saw the first rent increase for four years, which would have increased the amount of rent loss when compared to preceding years. In addition, the pandemic has had a financial impact across the borough, with vacant properties taking longer to relet due to repairs taking longer, and the difficulties in allocating properties during the national lockdowns in Q1, Q2 and Q4. The Council was below the London-wide average (1.88% in 2019/20) for percentage of rent lost through vacant properties.

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) AND TENANCY ENFORCEMENT

The following graphs show different kinds of enforcement action taken against residents for anti-social behaviour in the financial year 2020/21. Data for all area teams is shown for comparison.

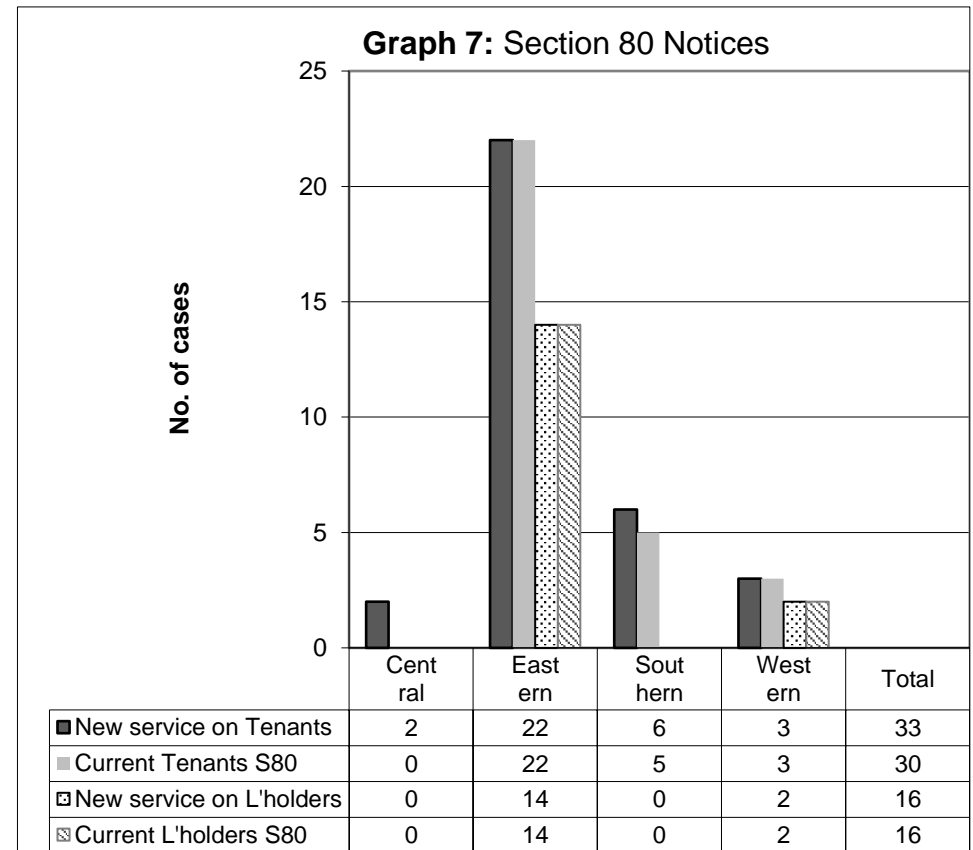
Notice Seeking Possession (NSP) served on secure and introductory tenants due to ASB - Housing Act 1985

As shown in Graph 6, 17 NSPs were served by Area Teams in 2020/21. This is up from the 25 served in 2019/20.



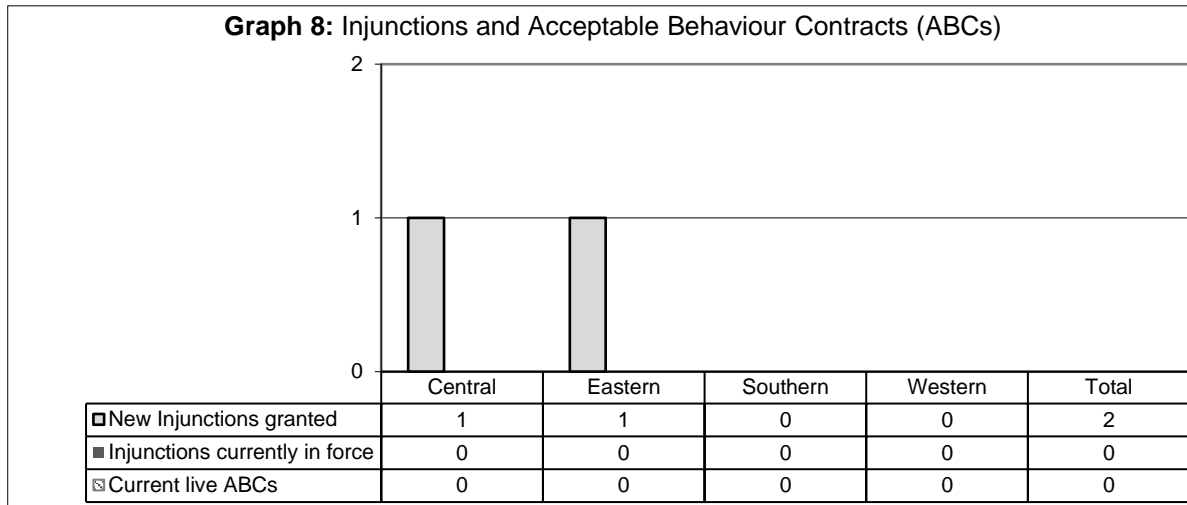
Section 80 Notices issued under the Environmental Protection Act 1990

Overall, the number of new Section 80 Notices served on tenants has decreased from 41 in 2019/20 to 33 in 2020/21 and increased from 12 during 2019/20 to 16 during 2020/21 for leaseholders.



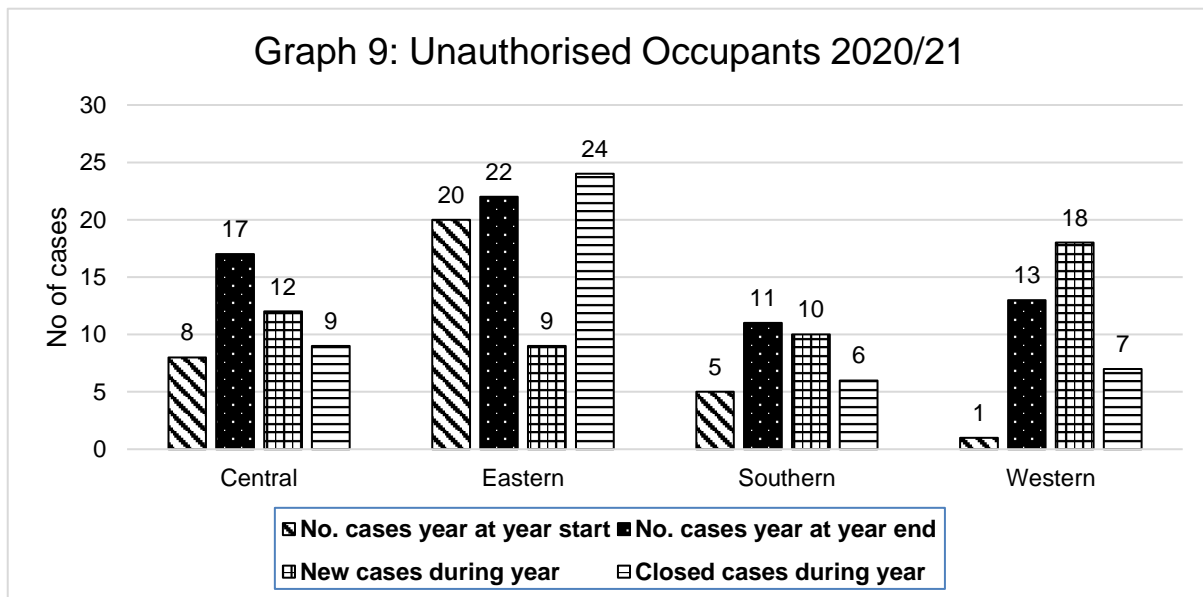
Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and injunctions

The figures shown in Graph 8 show that the number of new injunctions being granted (2) has increased by 1 when compared to 2019/20.



Unauthorised Occupants

An unauthorised occupant is a person who is, or remains, in occupation of a property after the departure of the previous tenant and where there is no automatic right of succession or transfer of tenancy to that person. The UO figures also include cases where tenants are caught sub-letting.



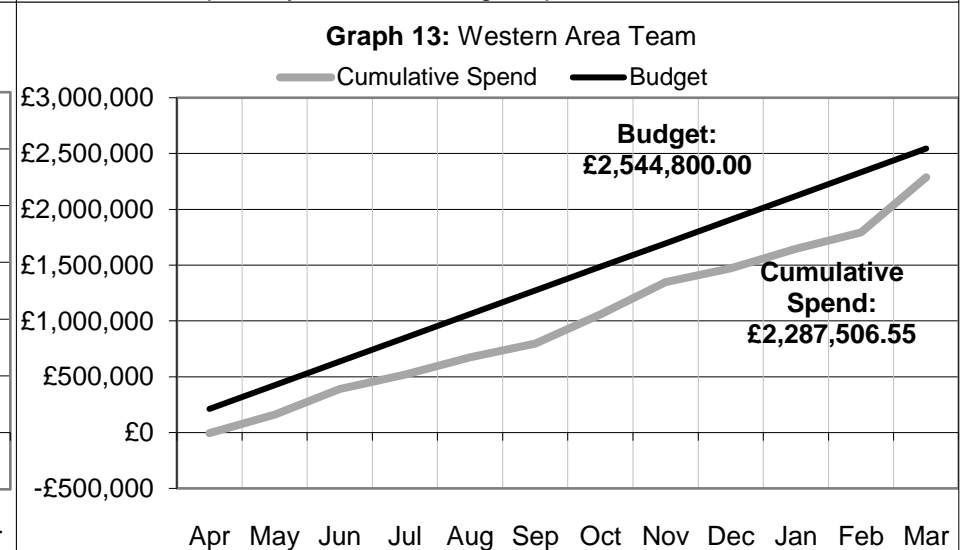
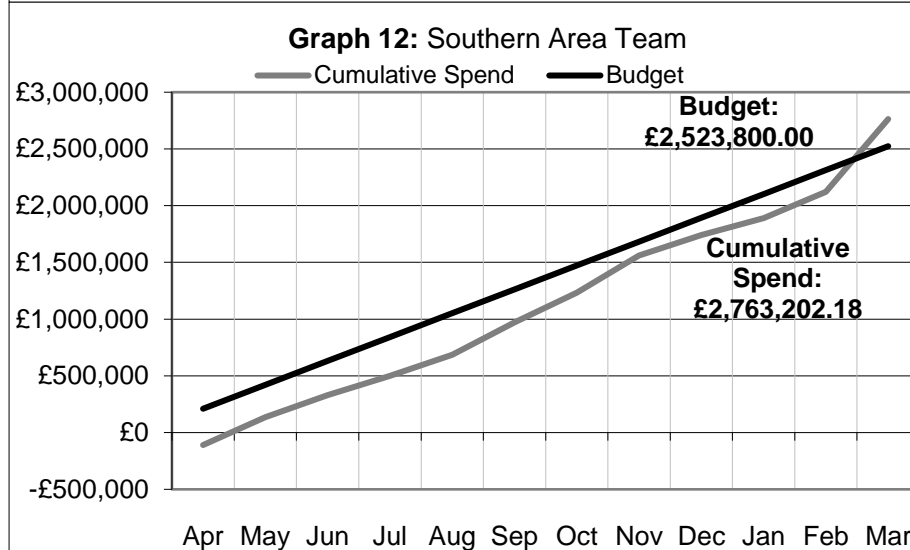
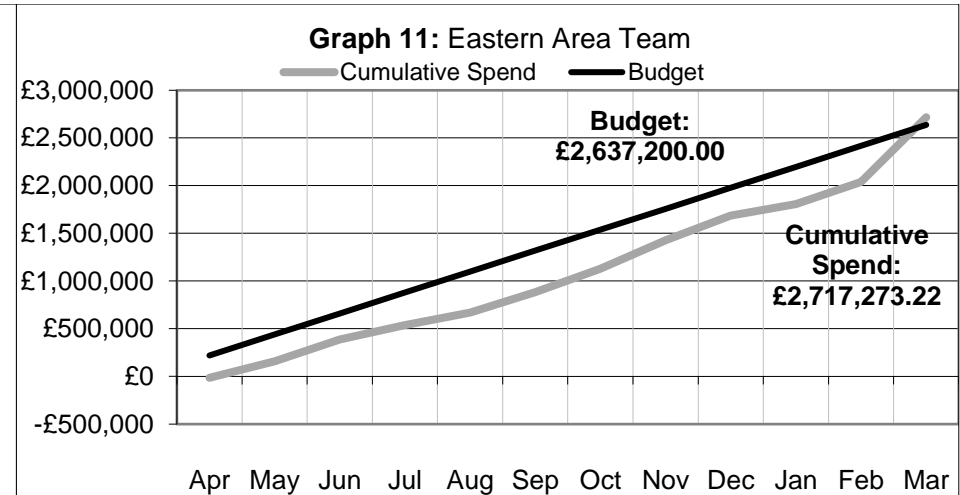
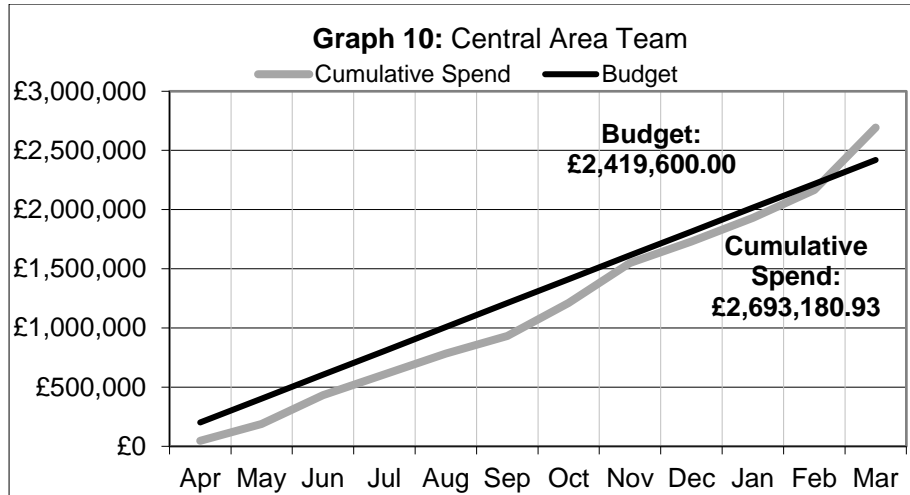
Possession Orders and Evictions

Where there has been a serious tenancy breach the Council can begin proceedings through the Courts to gain possession of a property, this can be for reasons of severe or continued ASB and/or high rent arrears. Often this is a last resort where intervention by the Council has failed to resolve an issue (e.g. NSP has been breached, continued noise after a S80 Notice, or failed intervention by the tenancy support service).

Due to the suspension of issuing possession orders and enforcing evictions during the coronavirus pandemic, only one eviction was enforced in the Eastern area team during Q1, and the eviction was carried out because the tenant had vacated the property before the enforcement date. No possession orders were issued during 2020/21.

BUDGETARY PERFORMANCE

A budget is set at the beginning of each financial year (April to March). Area Team budgets are set using either historical outturn data (such as repairs and general maintenance costs) or fixed costs. The budget for the Area Teams is for the maintenance of tenanted properties and associated block repairs. The graphs below show performance for each service area in 2020/21. The black line relates to the budget provided; the grey line relates to actual expenditure.



COMPLAINTS MONITORING

The council has a corporate procedure for dealing with complaints from its customers. During Q1 to Q3 2020/21, a 3-step procedure was in place, meaning if a customer was unhappy with the response at step 1, the complaint would go to the next step so the complaint is reviewed; the corporate target for a full response to the complaint was 10 working days at each step. The complaints procedure has been reviewed, and from Q4 2020/21 a 2-step procedure was put in place, with a corporate target for a full response being received within 20 working days for step 1 complaints, and 15 working days for step 2 complaints. The table below shows the breakdown of complaints relating to the Housing Management Division, which includes step 1-3 complaints during Q1 to Q3, and step 1-2 complaints during Q4.

Sections	Section Sub Total				2020/21 complaints dealt with at:		
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Area Teams	120	168	105	101	44	39	18
Major Works and Leasehold and Procurement	11	7	20	11	6	3	2
Supported Housing Services	19	12	3	21	20	1	0
Estate Services	9	14	7	1	0	1	0
Support Services	3	8	5	5	1	3	1
RMOs and Co-ops	28	24	24	44	44	0	0
Total	190	233	164	183	115	47	21
					63%	26%	11%

During the year, the Department received 299 complaints (183 for Housing Management, 17 contractor complaints and 99 relating to other divisions) compared with 227 for the services in 2020/21, an increase of 31.8%. The number of complaints received regarding the Housing Management Division increased by 11.6%, from 164 to 183. 63% of complaints regarding Housing Management were concluded at step one of the complaints procedure, which means that the majority are dealt with at this stage, without the need for them to be escalated by the complainant.

Out of the 183 complaints received regarding the Housing Management Division, the area teams received 101 complaints in total for 2020/21, which is a 3.8% decrease compared to the 105 complaints received for the area teams in 2019/20. Of the 101 complaints received for the area teams in 2020/21, Central received 5 (5.0%), Eastern received 45 (44.6%), Southern received 33 (32.7%) and Western received 18 (17.8%).

The Department as a whole responded to 55.9% of complaints within the target time in 2020/21, compared to 69.2% in 2019/20. The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the number of complaints received and the speed in which complaints were responded to, especially considering much of the service within the Division was significantly reduced due to the national lockdowns, with most staff working from home. It is unsurprising that the number of complaints increased for RMOs and Co-ops and the Housing Services Division, who faced the challenge of providing services with local offices shutdown during the national lockdowns. The number of complaints and the speed in which they are dealt with are expected to improve with the easing of lockdown restrictions. Continuous monitoring of complaints takes place to ensure that any increases can be identified and addressed quickly and efficiently. Complaints are considered constructively and where possible are used to improve services. The Department is keen to learn from complaints to ensure the service provided to residents continues to be of a high standard and improvements and suggestions can be incorporated into service delivery.