

**WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL - HOUSING AND REGENERATION
DEPARTMENT**

AREA HOUSING PANEL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

October 2020

Quarter 1: April – June 2020

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Key to Direction of Travel: Where a comparison with either the previous quarter or the equivalent quarter in the previous financial year is shown, an arrow indicates the direction of change between the previous quarter and the current quarter.

Introduction

Information on the quarterly performance of the housing management Area Teams and the contractors under their control is provided on the following pages of this document. This paper will be reported to each Area Housing Panel where the Area Housing Manager will briefly introduce the statistics at the meeting and will respond to any questions the residents' representatives may have.

The figures below relate to Council tenants and leaseholders who are required to pay rent and / or a service charge for the management services provided by the area teams as at 1st April 2020.

Residential properties managed by resident management organisations (RMOs)

	Tenanted	Leasehold	Total	Area Team
All Saints Coop	23	26	49	Southern
Convent Coop	34	61	95	Central
Felsham Road	46	42	88	Western
Chatham Coop	2	15	17	Southern
Totteridge Coop	103	35	138	Central
Wimbledon Park Coop	47	232	279	Western
Goulden House Coop	41	228	269	Southern
Carey Gardens Coop	224	174	398	Eastern
Patmore Coop	578	276	854	Eastern
Ackroydon East TMO	128	146	274	Western
Battersea Fields RMO	339	171	510	Central
McCarthy Court RMO	38	40	78	Southern
RMOs Total	1603	1446	3049	
Grand Total	16,890	15,724	32,614	
	51.8%	48.2%	100%	

Residential properties managed by area housing team:

	Tenanted	Leasehold	Total	Percentage of stock
Central	3532	4104	7636	25.8%
Eastern	4401	3141	7542	25.5%
Southern	3305	3851	7156	24.2%
Western	4049	3182	7231	24.5%
Total	15,287 (51.7%)	14,278 (48.3%)	29,565	100%

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 necessary to minimise the spread of the virus impacted on what services were delivered and how, with most staff working from home.

In line with Government guidance, the Department was carrying out essential, emergency repairs throughout quarter 1, 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 repairs were subject to their company's risk assessments which reflected Government guidance for operatives. In August, in line with the easing of lockdown restrictions, Government guidance was refreshed and all routine, non-essential repairs and visits are now permitted.

With a reduction in the Council services, the vacancy turnaround time was also impacted. This was due to a combination of supply shortages affecting necessary works to vacant properties and restrictions on viewings and house moves.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 introduced measures to ensure no-one loses their home as a result of the pandemic by suspending all current eviction proceedings and blocking new applications. This has since been extended until 20th September with new six month notice periods to be in place until at least 31st March 2021. For this reason, the number of possession orders issued, and evictions undertaken for Q1 and Q2 20/21 are likely to be '0', though repossessions can still go ahead if the property has been vacated by the occupant.

Due to the challenges the Council faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council will not be rated against targets during 2020/21. The housing management service is committed to delivering the highest quality service to residents and will endeavour to continue to monitor performance against targets set in 2019/20.

Stock condition and energy efficiency

Proportion and Number of Homes Non-Decent (not meeting the Decent Homes Standard)

Target for 2020/21: Maintain 100% compliance with 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 central heating installed the installation takes place when the property becomes void. Where an individual tenant does not want work carried out on their home to bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard, then 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 (Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance). There are a few exceptions to this, e.g. where works are required to maintain the structural integrity of the dwelling or prevent other components within the dwelling from deteriorating. 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 category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
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.

* As defined by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance

How are we performing locally? Whilst efforts are made to encourage tenants to allow bathroom and kitchen upgrades or to allow central heating installation whilst in occupation, we sometimes have to agree to put work on hold until the property is vacated.

Number of properties where upgrade refused by tenant area team

	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	0.47%	0.29%	1.30%	0.26%	0.55%

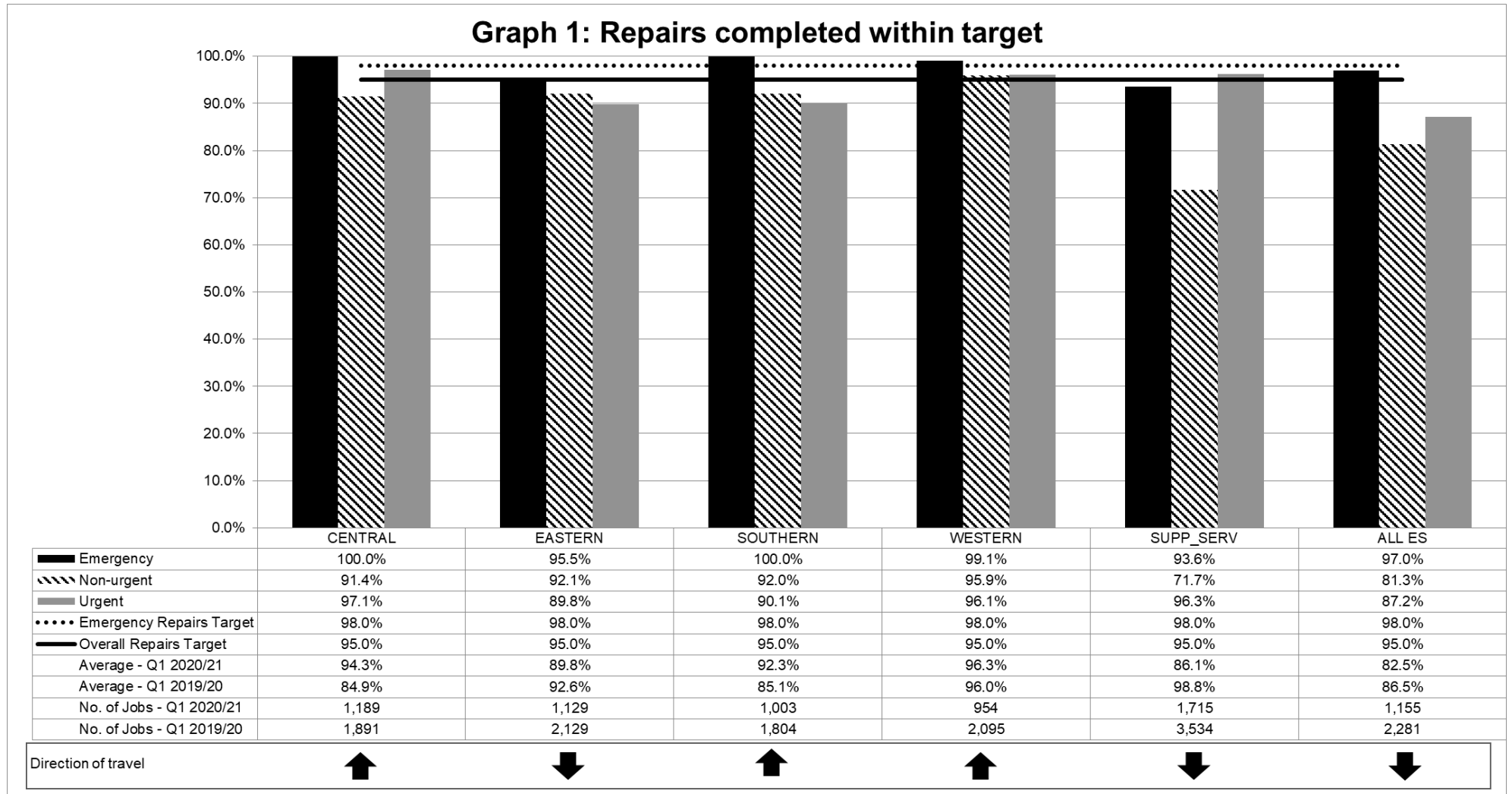
Completion of repairs within priority times allocated

The Department is responsible for ensuring that repairs to tenanted properties are completed on time. When completing repairs each area team is instructed to use the broad guidelines which are shown below. This list is illustrative of the priority that has been awarded to a repair order and should not be considered as exhaustive. For emergency repairs the area team will first aim to make the repair safe within the time allocated, if more work is then needed a subsequent repair order will be raised.

Category	Response target	Type of repair
Emergency	Within 2 hours of notification	Major bursts etc where unable to isolate supply Danger to persons. Lifts in blocks of 10+ storeys and sheltered blocks
	Within 4 hours of notification	Other lifts Entry call door where system failed in lock mode
	Within 24 hours of notification	Heating & hot water Entry call door – other faults
	Within 1 working day	Emergencies Burst pipes Loss of power
Urgent	Within 3 working days	Total or partial loss of space heating or hot water or partial loss of water
	Within 7 working days	Repairs to water supply installations (enhanced priority for elderly and/or disabled residents)
Non-urgent	Within 10 working days	Work to vacant properties for re-letting
	Within 20 working days	Repairs to windows, doors and minor leaks
	Within 60 working days	Planned repairs – fencing, paving, and surface renewal etc.

Repairs performance is closely monitored by the Housing and Regeneration Department. **Graph 1** sets out the repairs performance of housing management area teams, the estate services section and the engineering services section. The graph shows the number of orders and percentage achievement for all priorities grouped into emergency (2-24 hours), urgent (3 to 7 days) and non-urgent (10+ days). Despite the Council not being targeted in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department still aims to complete **95%** of all repairs within the 2019/20 target times allocated, and **98%** of emergency repairs within the 2019/20 target times.

The Area Teams are responsible for the maintenance of tenanted properties and associated block repairs; the Engineering Services section maintains and repairs lifts, entry-call systems, heating, etc.; and the Estate Services section maintains the communal parts of all estates and non-residential properties.



As can be seen the majority of teams are completing emergency and urgent repairs within target timescales. Increased contract monitoring arrangements, including monthly performance reporting and regular meetings are in place to ensure contractors are completing jobs within target times. There were significantly fewer orders raised for Q1 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of repairs completed, and number of repairs completed on time across all priorities for each area team is as follows:

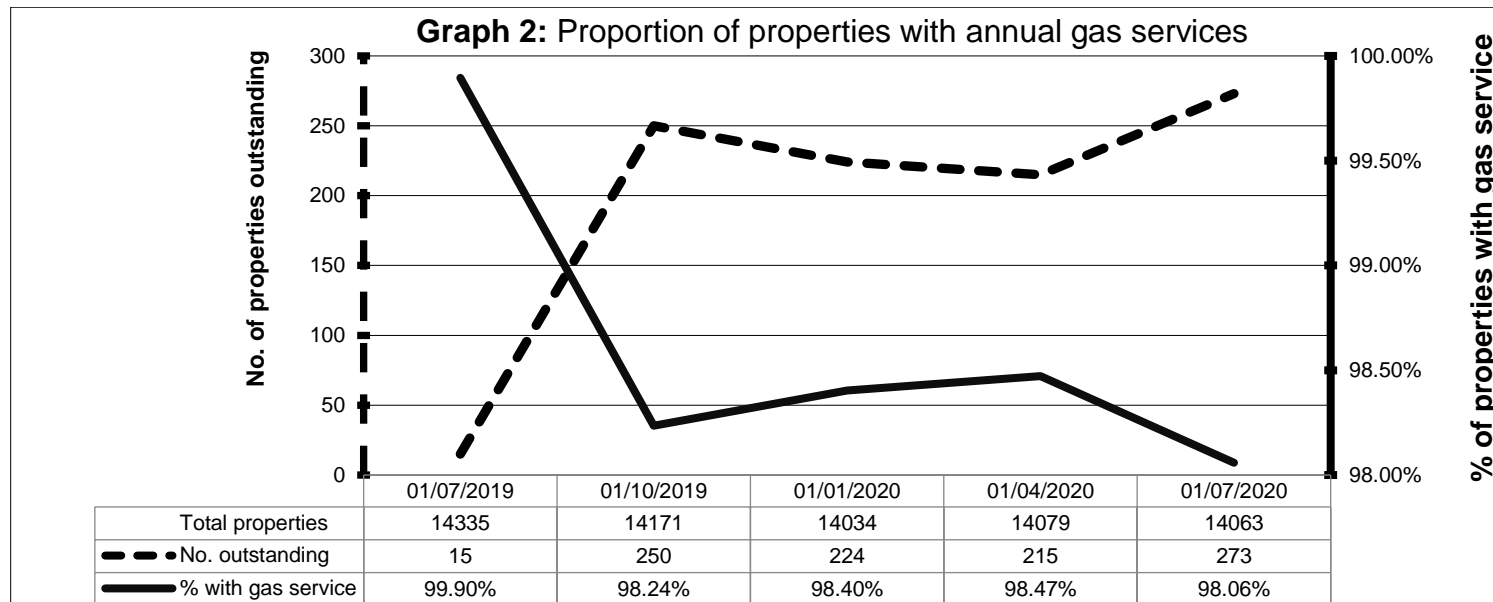
- **Central** completed 1,189 repairs in Q1, 1,121 of these were completed within target time.
- **Eastern** completed 1,129 repairs in Q1, 1,032 of these were completed within target time.
- **Southern** completed 1,003 repairs in Q1, 926 of these were completed within target time.
- **Western** completed 954 repairs in Q1, 919 of these were completed within target time.

Proportion of gas service certificates outstanding

Target for 2020/21: 100% of properties with a gas service in the last 12 months

A landlord safety certificate is the minimum required by the Gas Regulations. All homes with gas appliances should be checked annually by a HomeSafe registered engineer who will undertake repair work and issue a gas safety certificate. For owner occupiers it is good sense, for landlords it is a legal requirement. 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. **Graph 2** shows the percentage of inspections completed (as a solid line) in the current and previous quarters. The dotted line indicates the number of properties with gas safety certificates outstanding. One of the main reasons for failing to carry out a gas safety check is due to tenants failing to provide access to the gas maintenance contractor. Though gas servicing continued during lockdown, it was reported that there were access issues where contractors were not able to enter some properties due to COVID-19.



Average vacancy turnaround times

Void turnaround calculates the time taken from a property becoming vacant to it being re-let and a new tenant signing a tenancy agreement. This is a figure that is also provided to Central Government and they have a specific set of rules for how this figure is calculated. There is no target for 2020/21 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In previous years, the council had a set target of 22 days (3.1 weeks) for the vacancy turnaround process, and the Council will continue to monitor progress in this area. The vacancy period is split between the following stages:

- The time taken for the Area Team or Co-op to make the property available for offer (e.g. carrying out repairs, lock changes, etc.). This period is known as the **Key Received (KREC) to Actual Completion Date (ACD) period** and has a target time of 10 days (excluding major works voids).
- The time taken by Lettings to re-let the property (from finding a suitable tenant to the new tenancy starting, including viewings). This period is known as the **Actual Completion Date (ACD) to Commencement of Tenancy (COT) period**.

In line with Government guidance major works voids are excluded from the KREC to ACD period and are instead counted only from the ACD to COT period. Therefore, the number of voids used to calculate the figure in **Table 1** will usually be less than the number of voids used to calculate the figure in **Table 2**.

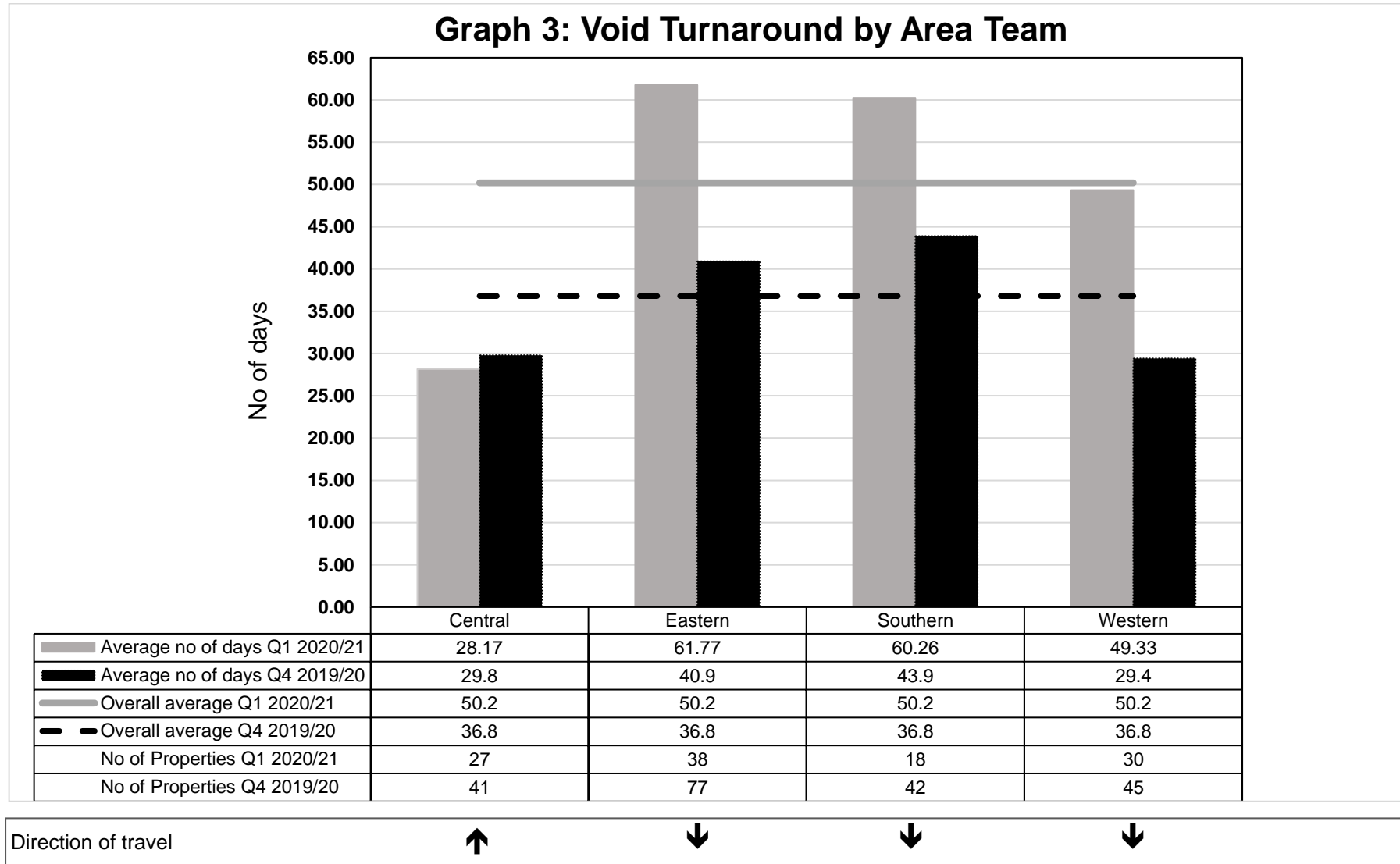
Table 1 below displays the Quarter 1 average KREC to ACD turnaround time for each area team when major works voids are excluded from the calculation.

Table 2 below displays the Quarter 1 average ACD to COT turnaround time for all voids managed by the respective Area Teams.

Table 1	
Area Team	Average time taken between KREC and ACD (days)
Central	25.6
Eastern	15.1
Southern	50
Western	29.4

Table 2	
Area Team	Average time taken between ACD to COT (days)
Central	25.3
Eastern	58.21
Southern	54.72
Western	44.8

Graph 3 shows the performance for the previous two quarters broken down by the Area Teams. These figures show the total void period from vacation of a property to reletting including major works voids where only ACD to COT is used.



For Quarter 1, the overall void turnaround time across the Area Teams (50.20 days) has increased since the end of the previous quarter (36.8 days). The rise in the turnaround time is largely due to issues which arose from COVID-19, particularly with suppliers not being able to source materials in order to complete jobs during the voids work period, including difficulties with the supply of plaster. The ACD to COT stage was also impacted by COVID-19 since applicants could not always attend viewings of the property or attend sign up appointments. The Council closely monitors void turnaround time and further analysis into the void figures has highlighted long-term voids which are impacting average figures. Quarterly void meetings are in place to monitor performance and issues with harder to let properties.

Tenancy Enforcement

The Housing and Regeneration Department has a long-standing commitment to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) to make estates and neighbourhoods safer. Our tenancy conditions provide a broad definition of ASB to reflect its wide-ranging nature. The tenancy conditions state that *'we will take reasonable steps to investigate complaints and will take action where appropriate, we will also do all we can to help solve problems with neighbours and take firm action against neighbours who cause a nuisance'*.

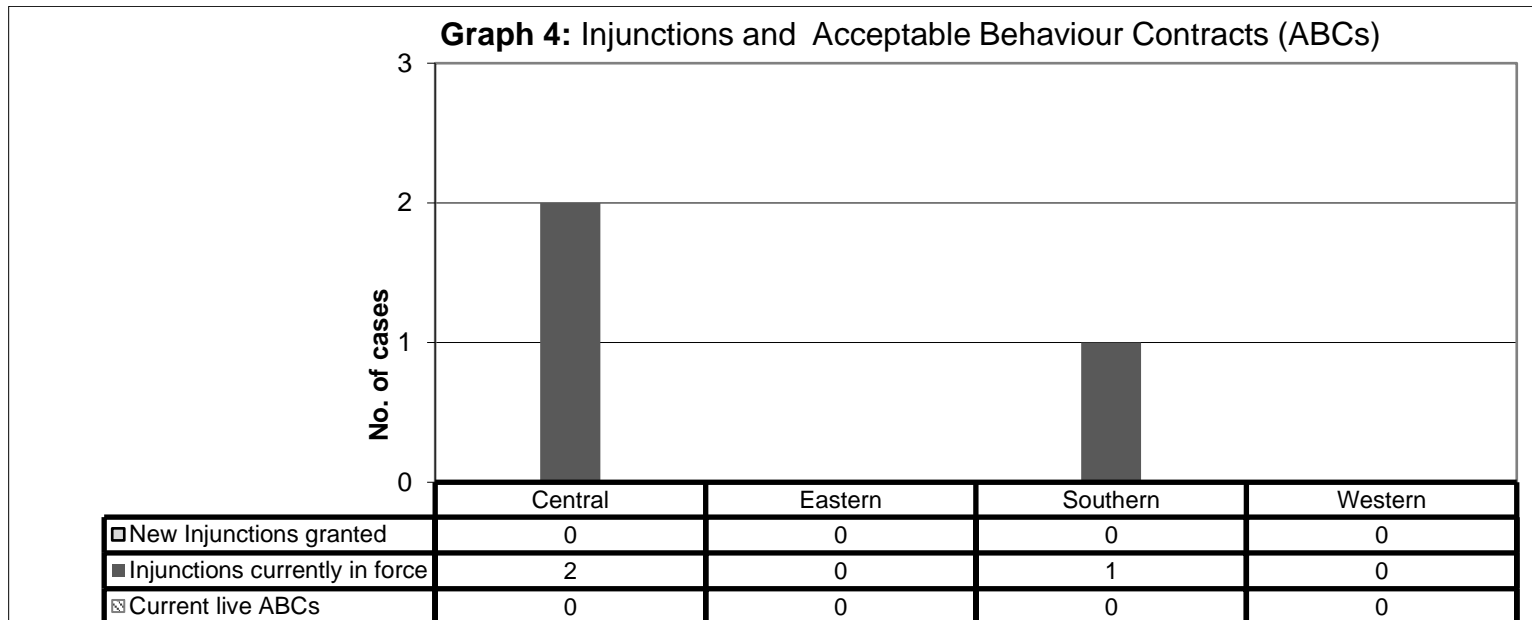
Examples of ASB which might cause the Council to take legal action against a resident include: using or threatening to use violence; hate crime or harassment due to race, religion, faith, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation; creating noise at a level that is intrusive or disturbing; drug dealing or alcohol/drug abuse. A full definition of ASB and the Department's approach can be found in our ASB policy statement which can be found on the Council's website - <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/community-safety/antisocial-behaviour/>. The following graphs show different kinds of enforcement action taken against residents for ASB. Data for all Area Teams is shown for comparison.

Injunctions and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)

In cases where an individual continues to commit ASB the Council can apply to the County Court for an injunction, this aims to prevent them from committing further incidents of ASB. An injunction is normally granted for a specified period of time and can be granted against any person aged 10 and over. If an individual breaches the terms of the injunction this can be treated as ‘contempt of court’ for which the judge may impose a fine or prison sentence.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) are used to prevent ASB and are generally voluntary agreements between a young person, their parents, the local authority, and the police. ABCs are used by the Council as a prevention tool to address problems of ASB before taking enforcement action. If an agreement is broken, then the relevant action will be taken which can include issuing an injunction or Notice of Seeking Possession.

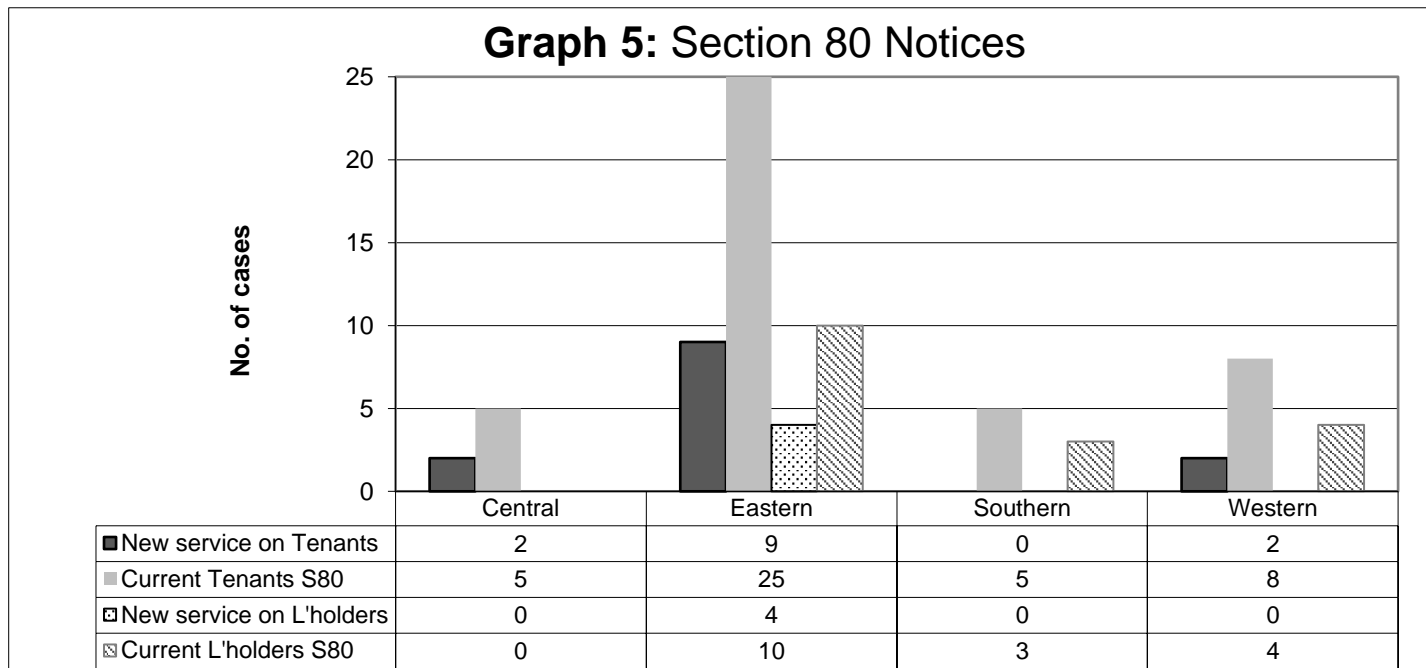
Graph 4 below shows the number of injunctions and ABCs issued for ASB across the Area Teams:



Section 80 Notices issued under the Environmental Protection Act 1990

Noise nuisance is one of the main types of ASB that is reported to the Council, and the Department aims to follow up 95% of noise complaints within 5 days. Where noise continues to be a problem an official warning will be served - this is called a Section 80 Abatement Notice. It can be served on any resident or person causing a statutory noise nuisance including tenants, leaseholders and their sub-tenants. If noise continues to be a problem and there is a further incident after a notice has been served court action can be taken, provided that sufficient evidence is available. If the perpetrator is then found guilty the court can impose a fine of up to £5,000 and/or authorise the seizure of equipment that caused the noise (e.g. speakers). This action alone does not result in eviction.

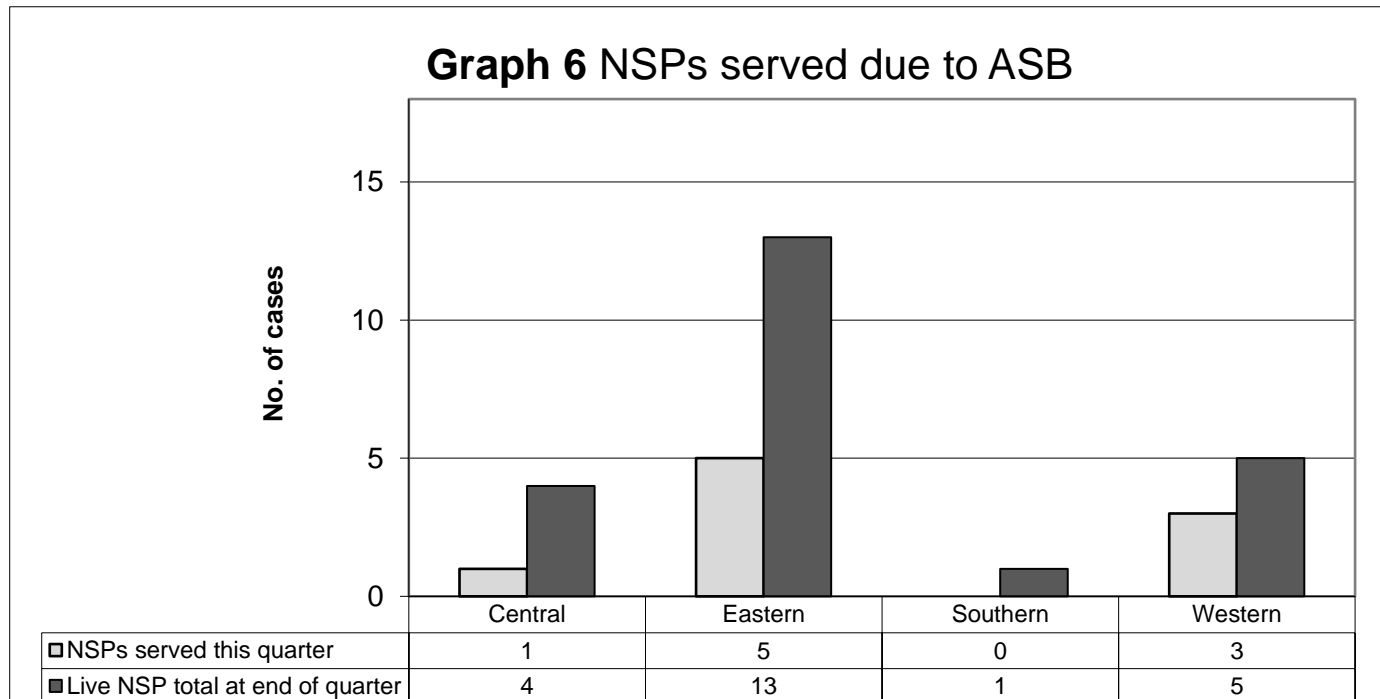
Graph 5 below shows the number of Section 80 Notices issued by Area Team for both tenants and leaseholders. The overall number of current Section 80 notices increased from 54 in quarter 4 2019/20 to 60 in quarter 1 2020/21.



Notice of seeking possession served on secure tenants - Housing Act 1985

The Council takes breaches of tenancy conditions seriously. If a Council tenant is found to have broken the terms of their tenancy a Notice of Seeking Possession (NSP) can be served on them where there is enough evidence to substantiate the facts of a breach. This is a formal warning from the Council that possession proceedings against the tenant will begin if there is any further breach within the following 12 months. If the tenancy breach is serious however court proceedings to gain possession of the property may begin straight away.

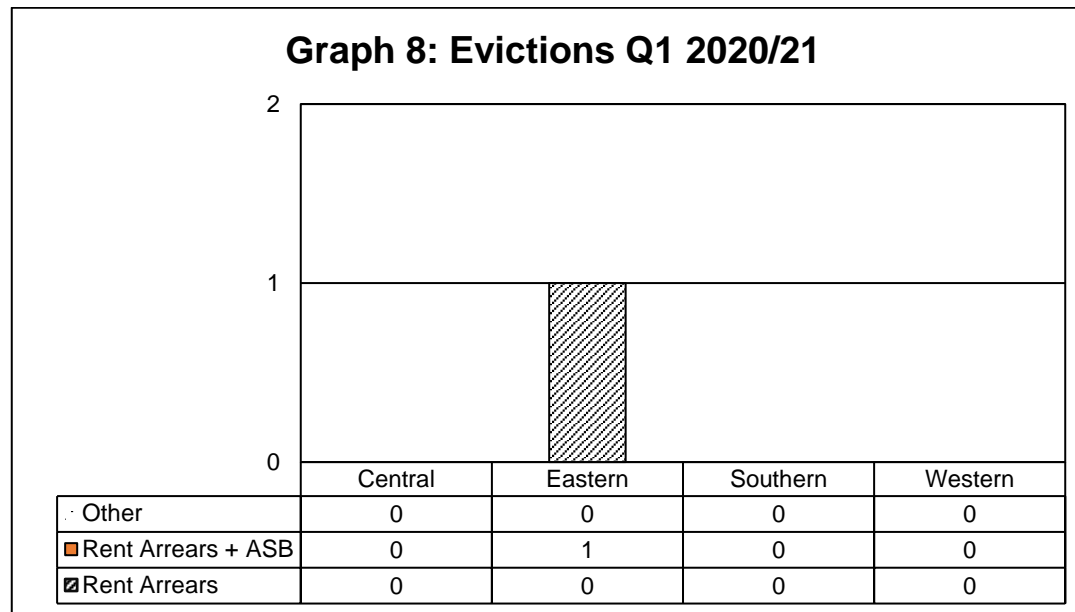
Graph 6 below shows the number of NSPs served during Q1, as well as a rolling total of live NSPs. The total number of live NSPs at the end of Q1 decreased from 24 in quarter 4 2019/20 to 23 in quarter 1 2020/21.



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).

Graph 7 has been removed as no Possession Orders were issued during Q1 20/21 due to the suspension of possession orders resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. **Graph 8** below shows the number of evictions carried out by the Area Team. There was one single eviction during Q1 20/21. The tenant of the property had been provided temporary accommodation by Wandsworth Council before lockdown and before the eviction took place, so the property was vacant when the eviction took place.



BUDGETARY PERFORMANCE

At the beginning of each financial year (April to March) housing management is allocated a number of budgets within which they are expected to repair and maintain the properties they manage. Housing management have a separate Engineering Services section to maintain and repair lifts, entry call systems, heating, etc, and an Estate Services section who maintain the communal parts of all estates and non-residential properties. The budget for the Area Teams is for the maintenance of tenanted properties and associated block repairs.

