

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

**AREA HOUSING PANEL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

**July 2021**

**Quarter 4: January – March 2021**

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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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

### Residential properties managed by area housing team:

	Tenanted	Leasehold	Total	Percentage of stock
Central	3,532	4,104	7,636	25.80%
Eastern	4,401	3,141	7,542	25.50%
Southern	3,305	3,851	7,156	24.20%
Western	4,049	3,182	7,231	24.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,287</b>	<b>14,278</b>	<b>29,565</b>	<b>100%</b>

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### 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
<b>RMOs Total</b>	<b>1,603</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>3,049</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16,890</b>	<b>15,724</b>	<b>32,614</b>	
	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>48.2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

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## **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 absolute 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. 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 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the number of non-urgent repairs reduced again, and are expected to rise to normal levels with the easing of lockdown restrictions.

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 viewings and house moves. However, the Department has responded well to the initial challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, and the void turnaround figure has seen a significant improvement during quarter 2 and 3, albeit the impact of the third national lockdown in January 2021 has again impacted the turnaround time which is largely due to some applicants being unable to attend property viewings due to their legal requirement to self-isolate. 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 loses their home as a result of the pandemic by suspending all current eviction proceedings, though due to the fluctuation in coronavirus transmissions, legislation is continuously under review and updated. As of the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2020, all new notice periods must be 6 months, and this will be in place until at least 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021. During September to November there was a short period where evictions could take place, however all evictions were again paused from the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021. Only in exceptional cases can an eviction take place, which includes 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 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

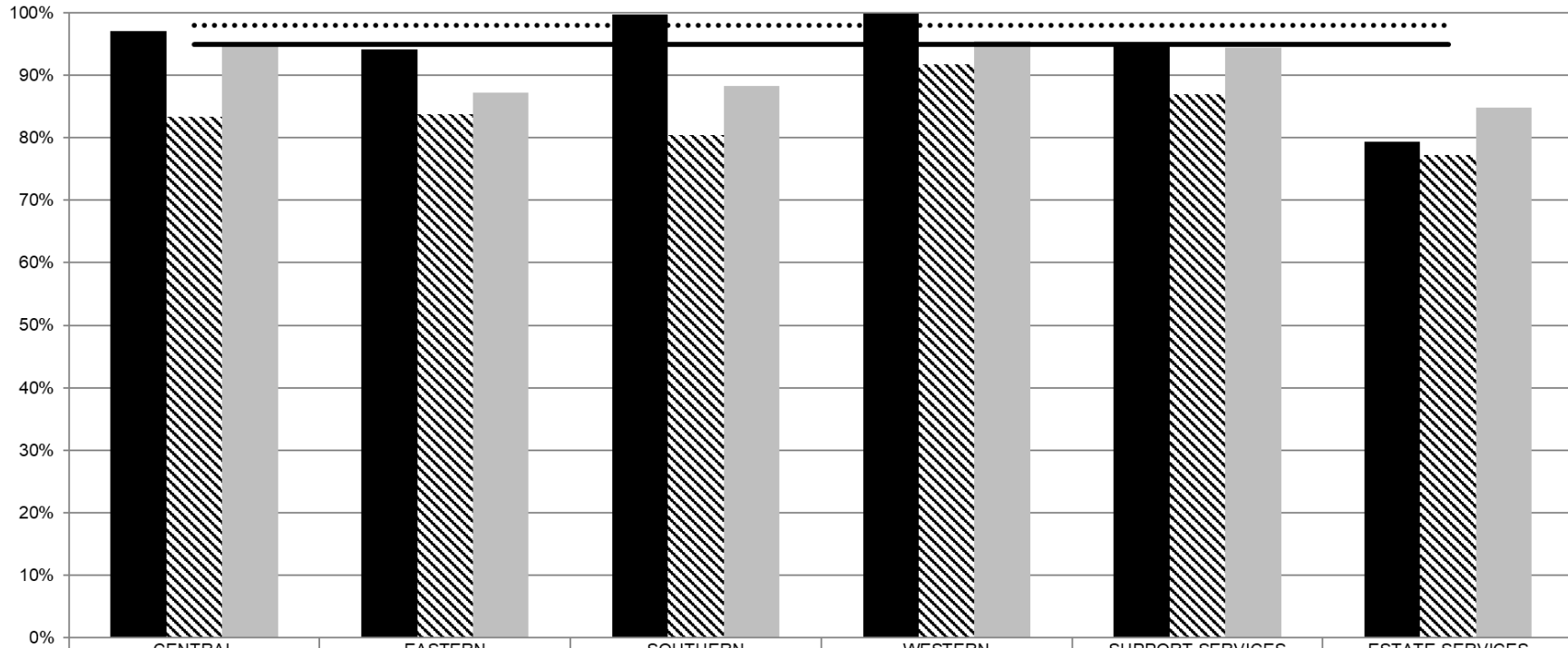
The Department is responsible for ensuring that repairs to tenanted properties are completed on time. When completing repairs each area team is instructed to use the broad guidelines which are shown below. This list is illustrative of the priority that has been awarded to a repair order and should not 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. The performance time is measured from when the repair order is raised, to the completion date of the repair which is when the contractor has reported that the repair is complete.

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 the 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 monitored against targets in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department still aims to complete **95%** of all repairs within the target times allocated, and **98%** of emergency repairs within target times.

The Area Teams are responsible for the maintenance of tenanted properties and associated block repairs; the Support 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.

**Graph 1: Repairs completed within target**



	CENTRAL	EASTERN	SOUTHERN	WESTERN	SUPPORT SERVICES	ESTATE SERVICES
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 - Q4 20/21	87.7%	85.5%	82.7%	93.3%	90.8%	78.1%
Average - Q4 19/20	82.9%	90.2%	78.3%	93.2%	91.7%	80.7%
No. of Jobs - Q4 20/21	7,695	8,879	7,518	7,982	10,355	8,771
No. of Jobs - Q4 19/20	8,735	9,808	8,515	9,662	13,026	10,723



As can be seen across the majority of teams, emergency and urgent repairs are completed 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, and with an easing of lockdown measures in August, repair orders began increasing to normal levels during Q2 and throughout Q3. However, during the third national lockdown from the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the number of non-urgent repairs began to decrease, though are expected to increase to normal levels with the easing of lockdown restrictions.

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

- **Central** completed 7,695 repairs by the end of Q4, with 6,745 being completed within target time.
- **Eastern** completed 8,879 repairs by the end of Q4, with 7,593 being completed within target time.
- **Southern** completed 7,518 repairs by the end of Q4, with 6,219 being completed within target time.
- **Western** completed 7,982 repairs by the end of Q4, with 7,445 being completed within target time.

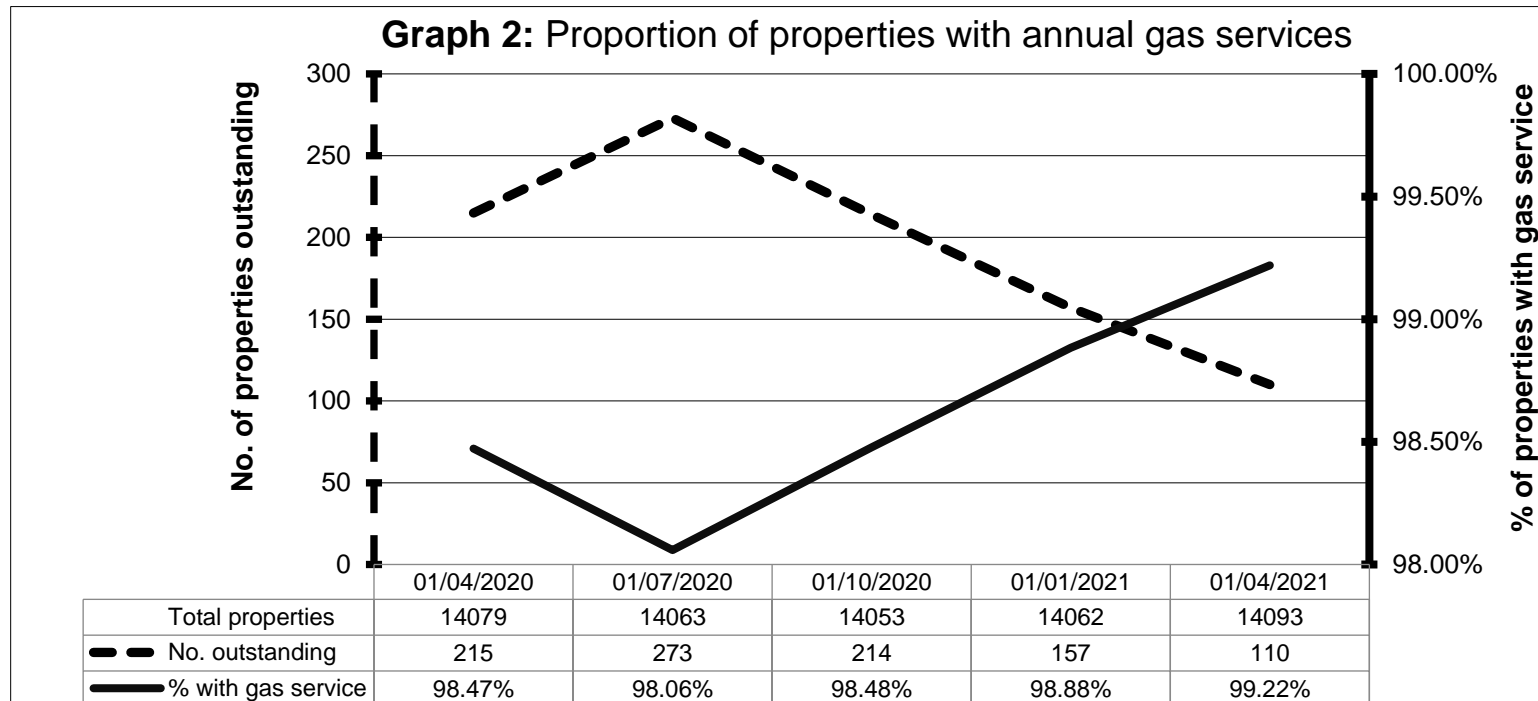


## Proportion of gas service certificates outstanding

### 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 and thereafter, it was reported that there have been continued 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 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** and has a target time of 11 days.

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.

**Table 1** below displays the Quarter 4 average KREC to ACD turnaround time for each area team when major works voids are excluded from the calculation.

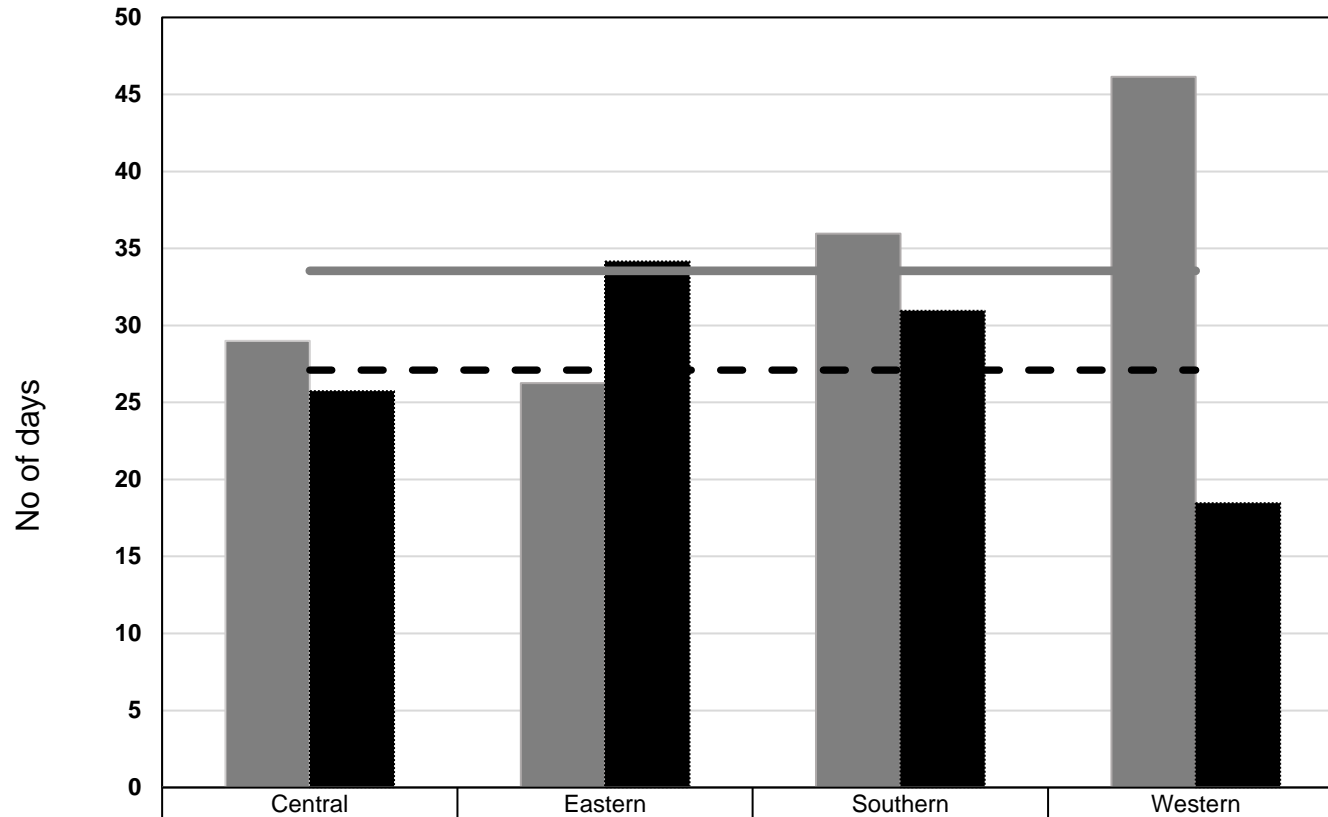
**Table 2** below displays the Quarter 4 average ACD to COT turnaround time for all voids managed by the respective Area Teams.

<b><u>Table 1</u></b>	
<b>Area Team</b>	<b>Average time taken between KREC and ACD (days)</b>
Central	26.80
Eastern	20.40
Southern	22.00
Western	17.71

<b><u>Table 2</u></b>	
<b>Area Team</b>	<b>Average time taken between ACD to COT (days)</b>
Central	21.12
Eastern	23.26
Southern	33.32
Western	40.24

**Graph 3** shows the performance for quarter 4 compared to quarter 3 broken down by Area Team. 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.

**Graph 3: Void Turnaround by Area Team**



■ Average no of days Q4 2020/21	29.00	26.26	35.96	46.14
■ Average no of days Q3 2020/21	25.73	34.15	30.96	18.46
— Overall average Q4 2020/21	33.55	33.55	33.55	33.55
- - Overall average Q3 2020/21	27.1	27.1	27.1	27.1
Q4 2020/21 No of Properties	17	34	25	21
Q3 2020/21 No of Properties	30	27	24	28

Direction of travel	↓	↑	↓	↓
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The overall void turnaround time for Q4 (33.55 days) has increased since the end of the previous quarter (27.10 days). During Q4, there have been a number of harder to let properties, with 5 properties having 3 to 4 offers before being accepted; if these properties are removed, the turnaround time reduces to 28.92. The turnaround time in the Western team had an increase from 18.46 days in Q3 to 46.14 days in Q4. This increase is largely due to 4 voids having significant delays whilst with the lettings team during the allocation stages of the relet process; if these 4 properties were removed, the turnaround time for the Western team reduces from 46.14 days to 29.88 days.

In addition, the turnaround time has been largely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, particularly during the lockdown in Q1, and the third lockdown during Q4; there have been numerous occasions where viewings and sign-ups have been cancelled due to the tenants medical and legal requirement to self-isolate. With the easing of lockdown and the reduction of COVID-19 cases, an improvement is expected in the turnaround time for 2021/22.

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'*.

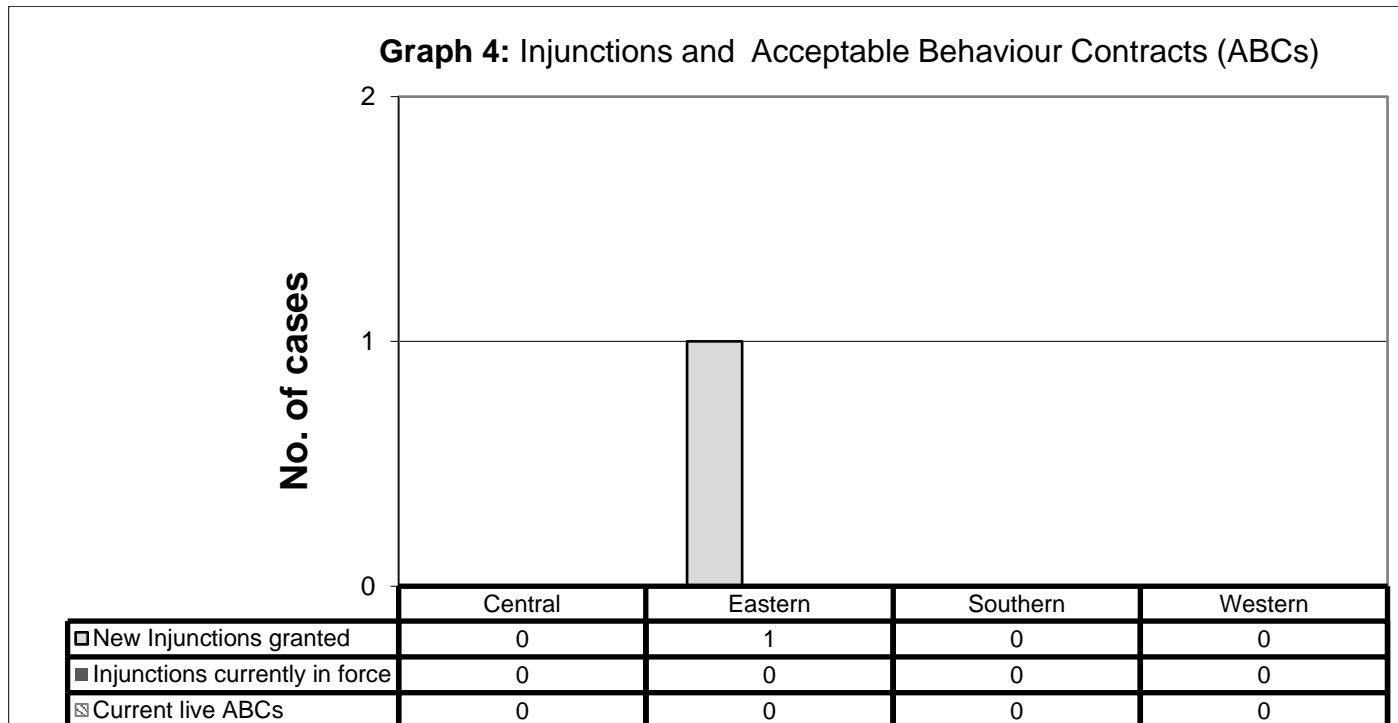
Examples of ASB which might cause the Council to take legal action against a resident include: using or threatening to use violence; hate crime or harassment due to race, religion, faith, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation; creating noise at a level that is intrusive or disturbing; drug dealing 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/media/5370/asb\\_housing\\_policy\\_statement.pdf](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/media/5370/asb_housing_policy_statement.pdf). 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.

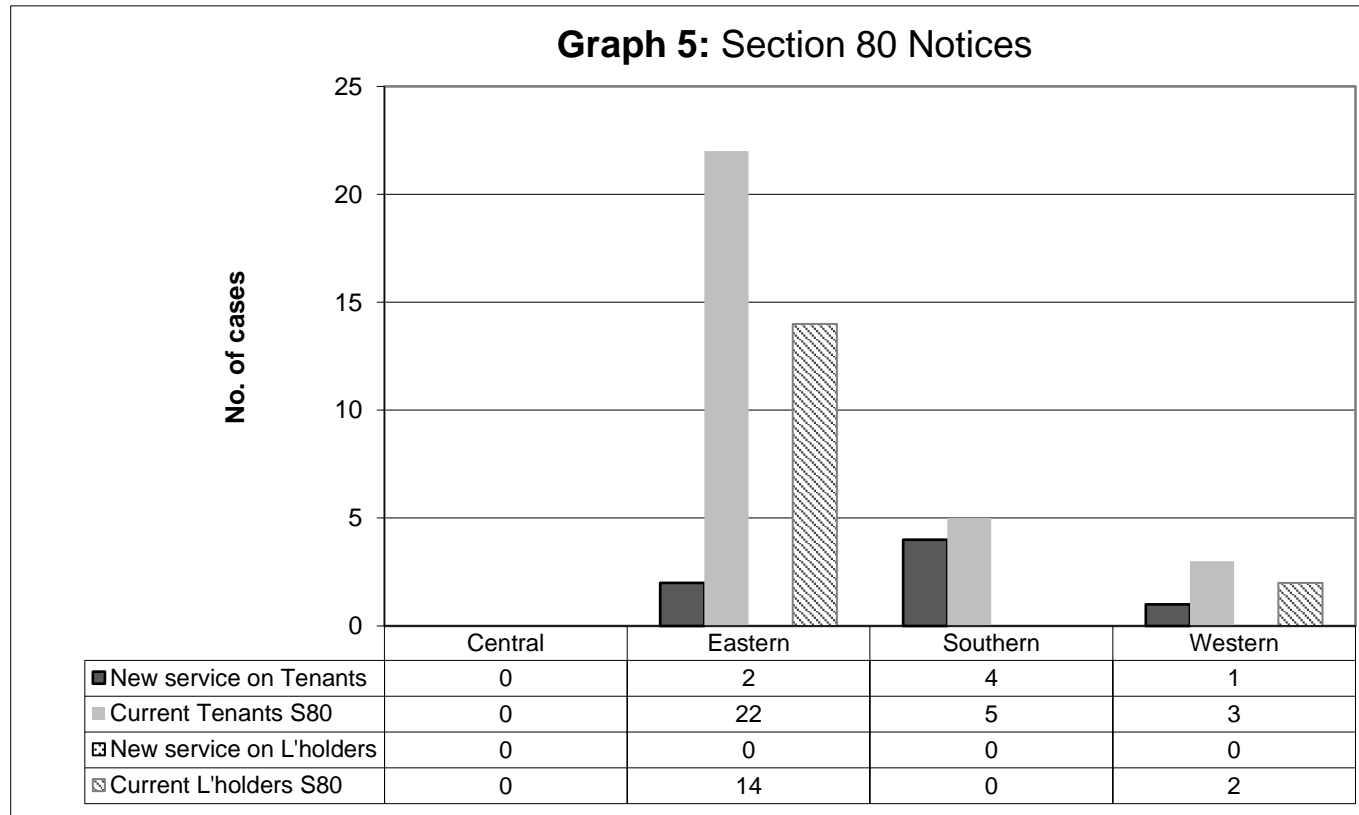
**Graph 4** below shows the number of injunctions and ABCs issued for ASB across the Area Teams. Only 1 injunction was granted during Q4, and the number of active injunctions in force has decreased from 2 in the previous quarter to 0 by the end of Q4, meaning there are currently no ABCs across all area 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.

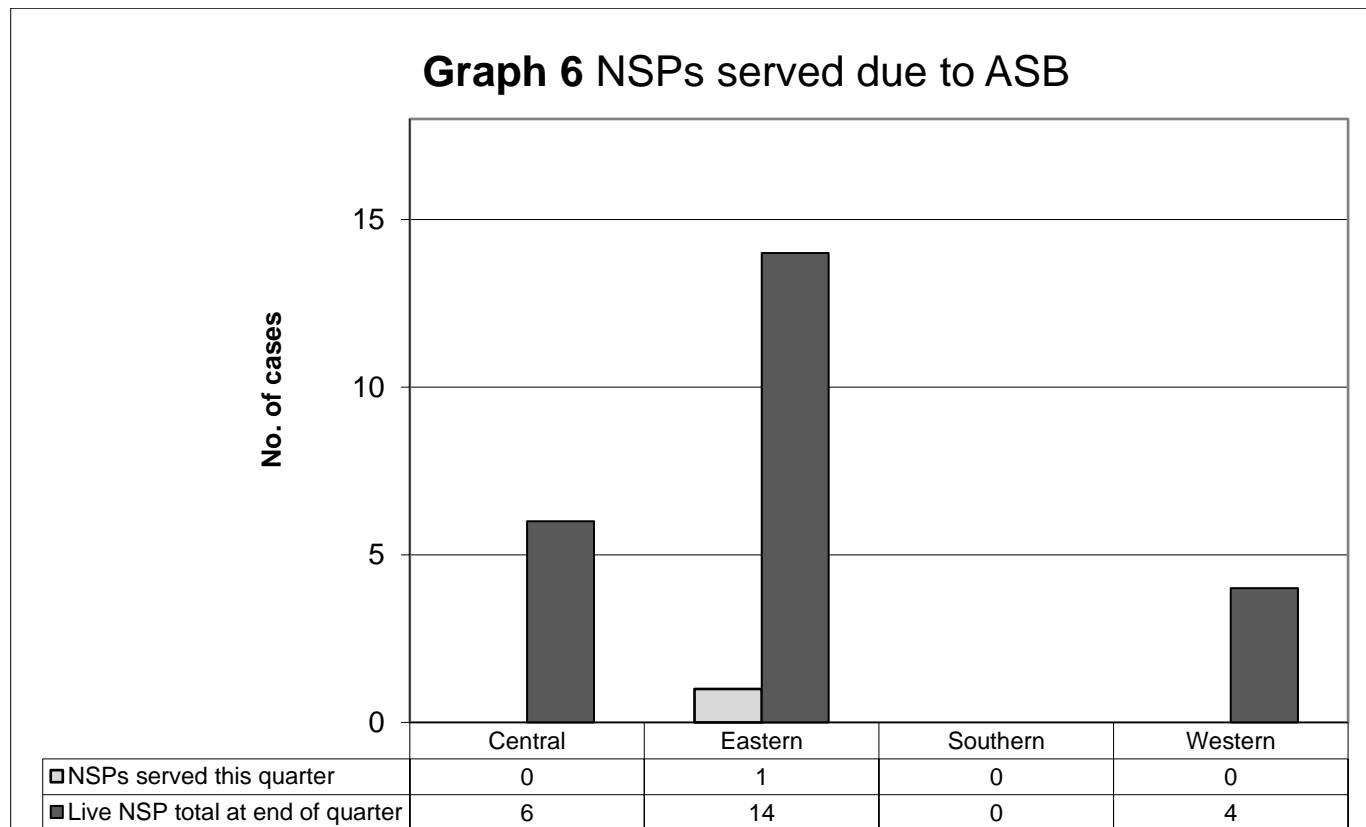
**Graph 5** below shows the number of Section 80 Notices issued by Area Team for both tenants and leaseholders. The overall number of current Section 80 notices decreased from 47 in Q3 2020/21 to 46 in Q4 2020/21.



**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 Q4, as well as a rolling total of live NSPs. The total number of live NSPs at the end of Q4 decreased from 25 in Q3 2020/21 to 24 in Q4 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).

Due to the suspension of issuing possession orders and enforcing evictions during the coronavirus pandemic, no possession orders were issued, and no evictions enforced during Q4.

## 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.

