



CITY OF  
*Lincoln*  
COUNCIL

# Operational Performance Report Q2 2021/22

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# Introduction

Members will recall that many services have, during 2021/22, faced an uphill challenge to restore services within the context of continued covid restrictions. More latterly, whilst restrictions have lifted, those challenges continue as service managers grapple with the need to re-introduce many of the cyclical inspections that were suspended both nationally and locally during the pandemic.

Services such as Private sector housing licensing inspections, Food premises inspections, gas and electrical safety inspections of our council houses are all facing significant restoration programmes that in some cases will take 18 months (as defined by governing bodies) to complete – with focus on the higher risk areas first (but noting that the highest risk inspections continued during the pandemic).

In other areas, such as Disabled facilities grants, we are finding that many customers are only more lately happy for our staff to enter their homes once more.

Layered over the top of this is additional activity in income generating areas to restore income levels as far as possible to pre -covid levels – areas such as car parking is working hard to generate income above current levels and our leisure provider is attracting new customers to replace those lost in lockdown.

Finally the council is having to find staff capacity to help the High Street recover - be that through the Town Fund administration or rolling out the Welcome Back Fund. Both take significant staff resource away from other activity to administer them.

Other aspects of council work also impacts service delivery:

- We are nearly through the 2021 'Towards Financial Sustainability' programme, which is designed to stabilise our financial situation post covid. There will inevitably be performance changes seen within some services as a result of financial and/or resource reductions, and targets may need to be adjusted in future years to reflect this permanent position
- In some areas we are still seeing additional demand which has been pent up through the last year and now that things are nearing a new normality, customers are making requests they have not felt able to for quite some time. This can clearly be seen through the rising number of contacts to the Customer Services team
- Members have and will continue, to take decisions on Policy that could affect performance, which will need to be reflected in the measures captured and the target aims for future years

Through all of the above we are still dealing with daily business; customers still need services to function as near normal as possible

So in summary, we remain a long way from business as usual and this is reflected in the report that follows.

## **INTERIM TARGET REVIEW**

As we committed to committee in August 2021, we have reviewed the 19 targets which had been changed from the previous year, with the following results:

1 target will be revised back to the 2020/21 rate (Rent collection)

1 measure is no longer applicable as it no longer exists (return on NEW commercial investments)

2 measures will be left as volumetric until next year when they will revert to measures (Work Based Learning – number and achievements of apprentices)

2 targets had already been increased - so these will both stay at the higher level

3 customer satisfaction measures that we are unable to collect in Customer Services, will not be re-started yet as we have not yet got an alternative process in place

The remaining 10 targets will stay as they have been for Q1 and Q2 as none of these are able to achieve their revised targets consistently.

# How to read this report

Measures belonging to **Chief Executives Directorate** – predominantly covering “Reducing all kinds of inequality”

Measures belonging to **Directorate for Communities and Environment** – predominantly covering “Lets enhance our remarkable place”








Measures belonging to **Directorate for Housing and Investment** - predominantly covering “Lets deliver quality housing”

Directorate for Major Developments doesn't monitor performance through strategic measures, and instead is performance managed by the progress of the various projects DMD owns under "Driving Inclusive Economic Growth" and “Let’s Address the Challenge of Climate Change”

The report details all measures by individual directorate grouping, with annual and quarterly measures split separately.

The report also includes data on our corporate measure categories:

- Health & wellbeing including sickness data
- Corporate complaints including Ombudsman rulings
- Resource information
- Appraisal information

	At or above target
	Below target
	Volumetric/contextual measures that support targeted measures
	Acceptable performance - results are within target boundaries
	Performance has improved since last quarter/year
	Performance has deteriorated since last quarter/year
	Performance has stayed the same since last quarter/year

# Authority Wide Performance Summary

Below is a summary of the performance measures status for each directorate and as an authority. The information is presented as a count of the measures, broken down by the directorates, status, and direction, as well as a total.

**G** At or above target

**R** Below target

**V** Volumetric/contextual measures that support targeted measures

**A** Acceptable performance - results are within target boundaries

Quarterly Strategic measure performance by status					
Directorate	Below Target	Acceptable	Above target	Volumetric	Total
CX	5	3	5	5	18
DCE	5	9	7	8	29
DHI	8	2	3	5	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>65</b>
Quarterly Strategic measure performance by direction					
Directorate	Deteriorating	No change	Improving	Volumetric	Total
CX	7	1	5	5	18
DCE	6	6	9	8	29
DHI	10	1	2	5	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>65</b>

# Chief Executives Directorate Performance

Service Area	Measure	Current Value	Status	Direction
Communications	Percentage of media enquiries responded to within four working hours	78.00	A	▲
Communications	Number of proactive communications issued that help maintain or enhance our reputation	26	A	▼
Work Based Learning	Percentage of apprentices completing their qualification on time	0.00	R	▼
Work Based Learning	Number of new starters on the apprenticeship scheme this quarter	2	V	▬
Work Based Learning	Percentage of apprentices moving into Education, Employment or Training	0.00	V	▬
Customer Services	Number of face-to-face enquiries in customer services	72	V	▬
Customer Services	Number of telephone enquiries answered in Channel Shift Areas (Rev & Bens, Housing & Env. Services)	31,960	V	▬
Customer Services	Average time taken to answer a call to customer services	413	R	▼
Accountancy	Average return on investment portfolio	0.13	A	▲
Accountancy	Average interest rate on external borrowing	3.15	G	▬
Revenues Administration	Council Tax - in year collection rate for Lincoln	49.58	R	▲
Revenues Administration	Business Rates - in year collection rate for Lincoln	55.70	R	▲
Revenues Administration	Number of outstanding customer changes in the Revenues team	3,737	R	▼
Housing Benefit Administration	Average (YTD) days to process new housing benefit claims from date received	17.50	G	▼
Housing Benefit Administration	Average (YTD) days to process housing benefit claim changes of circumstances from date received	5.49	G	▼
Housing Benefit Administration	Number of Housing Benefits / Council Tax support customers awaiting assessment	1,411	G	▲
Housing Benefit Administration	Percentage of risk-based quality checks made where Benefit entitlement is correct	95.26	G	▼
Housing Benefit Administration	The number of new benefit claims year to date (Housing Benefits/Council Tax Support)	1,995	V	▬

## **Communications**

In Q2, 78% of media enquiries were responded to within our four-hour target. This is a slight increase on the previous quarter (76%) and remains within target boundaries.

As is usual over the summer months, the number of media enquiries dropped and, subsequently, the number of overlapping enquiries was also lower. This allowed a quicker response time for most enquiries.

A variety of enquiries were submitted and responded to, ranging from us reaching agreement with the county council on the future of the Usher Gallery to the ongoing (at the time) protest around the proposed closure of some public toilets and the repeated vandalism of the statues on the Imp Trail.

As the number of enquiries dropped, then so did the need to issue proactive communications to help maintain or enhance our reputation. During Q2 we issued 26 of these, the majority of which related to stories around the perceived cleanliness of the high street, the number of weeds growing around the city and fly-tipping on private land. These factual communications were issued to correct any misunderstandings resulting from a media article or comments on social media.

## **Work Based Learning**

As indicated in the last report, we have been working with service areas to identify apprenticeship opportunities and are now recruiting where services have confirmed that they can support an apprentice. We have been able to recruit a further two apprentices this quarter bringing the yearly total to six (including the two for WLDC). However, we also have two more waiting for a start date, one at shortlisting stage and one more vacancy. There are also apprenticeship opportunities for our existing employees where it supports their development and is aligned to the delivery of our strategic objectives and required skills. Currently we have 11 of these in place, nine of which are managed by Work Based Learning.

In Q2 there were no apprentices expected to complete their courses. So whilst the measure WBL1 (on appendix B and the table above) shows as red – that is simply that due to the lack of new starters during 2020 due to the effects of Covid, meaning that we are not yet in a position where we have apprentices coming towards the end of their courses.

## **Customer Services**

During Q2, Customer Services has seen a total of 72 face to face customers at City Hall, as we continue to offer appointments for complex and essential visits only.

Customers are still given assistance with routine enquiries through emails and telephone calls, but complex queries about benefits, council tax accounts or tenancy matters remain by appointment only. Demand from the public is still relatively low, having only increased from 53 in Q1. This system seems to be working well for both customers and staff



In total 187 customers have been seen face to face across all services. This includes people seen by the Welfare Team, Housing Officers, Homelessness and Parking. The majority of appointments have been with the Welfare team.

This quarter we have seen a total of 32356 calls – compared against 28477 received in Q2 2019/20 which was the last pre-covid comparison and 29,934 received last Q2. We have also seen an uplift on the number of calls received in the key channel shift areas, (see table below). The team does now handle a significant and growing number of Housing Solution calls, which were transferred to the team from Q2 last year. Call numbers have increased from Q1 this year, when the total number of calls received was 31,530.

<b>Service</b>	<b>No. calls Q2 2020</b>	<b>No. calls Q2 2021</b>	<b>Average Length of calls in Q2</b>
Refuse/environmental	5092	5204	Refuge 5m 59secs Environmental 5m 48secs
Housing solutions /homeless	3914	5201	Housing Solutions 10m 59 secs Homelessness 10m11sec
Housing (tenants)	12983	12352	Housing 9m 33secs Repairs 8m 51secs
Council Tax/Benefit	7615	9203	Revenues 9m 5secs
Sub-total	29,604	31,960	
Others	330	394	Green waste – 5m 47secs
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,934</b>	<b>32,356</b>	<b>Overall 9 min 3 seconds</b>

*Table 1 – Calls to Customer Services split by Channel Shift areas*

Calls in Q2 were answered on average in 413 seconds, which is outside of the target boundaries of 3-5 minutes. As already indicated, the number of calls answered has risen in comparison to the previous Q2. The complexity of calls that the COVID-19 legacy has left for some customers has unfortunately extended the length of the call needed. As of the end of September, the average length of call is now at 9 minutes 3 seconds compared to 5 minutes 33 seconds in Q2 2020.

Whilst in Q1 we reported that the team had faced a sudden unplanned staff shortage, it is pleasing to report that all vacancies except one have been filled and training for the new starters is underway.

### **Accountancy**

The average return on our investment portfolio currently stands at 0.13%, which is now just inside the target of 0.12 to 0.18, and in line with the Bank of England base rate of 0.10%. We expect that interest rates will increase during 2022, which will be considered as part of the development of the new MTFS.

We continue to do well on the average rate of interest on external borrowing which, at 3.15% is still below the lower target boundary of 3.75%, with further shorter-term borrowing expected during Q3, details of which will be in the Q3 Financial report.

## **Revenues Administration**

At the end of Q2 the Council tax collection figure was 49.58% which is just 0.42% below the target boundaries for this measure, and 0.95% below the figure at the end of Q2 in 2020-2. However, this does mean that we are currently showing a red status for this measure.

Recovery of monies due to the council has been delayed a little this year due to the Covid Pandemic. However, there was a court hearing on 24th September 2021 which is the first one for the 2021 debt. In normal circumstances the first large court hearing for the year would take place in July of the relevant year, therefore recovery for 2021 is delayed by approximately 2 months due to the pandemic. We have outstanding hardship relief money for Council Tax which will be awarded over the remainder of the year, which will not only assist residents, but also have a positive effect on in year collection.

The NDR collection figure of 55.7% is approximately 9.45% below the figure at the end of Quarter 2 in 2020-21, and outside of Q2 targets of 58.5% to 58.58%

However, the Expanded Retail Relief is creating an issue with the mathematics of how we calculate the collection figure. In 2020-21, the liability for the year was generally evenly distributed over the 12 months of the year. However, for 2021-22, 945 customers have nothing to pay for the first 3 months of the year which moves the sums that they are due to pay, into the last 9 months of the year. Of these 945, 606 also claimed the 66% reduction for July to March meaning that these customers will only pay approximately 25% of their annual liability, in instalments from July to March. Customers without the Expanded Retail Relief still have to pay their liability from April to January/March. When calculating the collection figures, we are calculating as if the liability is spread over the 12 months when for a number of customers this isn't the case. This is making comparison to last year's collection figures difficult as we are not comparing like for like and our reports cannot provide information on individual cases just on the debt and payments as a whole.

Recovery/court for NDR has not been delayed this year, court hearings for unpaid bills for NDR started in June for the customers who had instalments starting from April, and - court hearings for unpaid bills for NDR started in September for the customers who had instalments starting in July.

There has been an expected increase in the number of outstanding customer changes, rising from 2,665 last quarter to 3,737 in Q2, meaning this measure remains at red status. New staff have been appointed to the vacancies in the Council Tax Administration Team, which has temporarily resulted in experienced officers undertaking training with new colleagues. In addition to this, court hearing dates have re-started, and this has had the effect of increasing the number of phone calls received, thus reducing the time that officers can respond to other correspondence.

The total numbers of correspondence received by the Revenues teams during Q2 is 13,829, and in the same period the team answered 11,900 phone calls.

Outstanding customer e-mails are now also being captured in the Revenues Document Management System, which was not the case in previous years – so these are now

also included as outstanding work waiting to be processed. Therefore, the reported figure at the end of Quarter 1 2021/22 effectively becomes the new 'baseline', and future targets will need to be amended to reflect this.

We have had unforeseen reduction in revenue staffing resources during the year, however, there is a plan in place to address this.

As indicated in the Q1 report, we expect to bring workloads down to nearer the targets by the end of Q3 as training reduces and new team members begin to clear higher levels of workload. However, this is still a significant challenge with work demands on the Revenues Team remaining high.

### **Benefit Administration**

It is worth noting that the Benefits Administration team has achieved a green above target status for all four of its measures in Q2, a significant achievement considering they have had to deal with the many changes in circumstances that our residents have faced over the last year.

In Q2, the average time to process new housing benefit claims was better than its target, achieving 17.5 days, which is slightly slower than in Q1 when it was 16.81 days. We continue to have weekly monitoring of claims progress to enable prompt decision making.

In respect of processing changes of circumstance, whilst there has been a small increase in the time taken since Q1 (which achieved 4.88 days), the performance at 5.49 days is still better than the target of 7 days. The increase is down to monthly changes in Universal Credit and in particular as furlough ended and people started or ended work, the changes in resident's circumstances continued to be high.

In Q2, the number of Housing Benefits/Council Tax support customers awaiting assessment has decreased, from 2098 in Q1 to 1411 this quarter, which is well under the 1,500 target. Of this number 1098 are still awaiting a first contact.

It is also good to see that the team has managed to retain a high-quality level achieving 95.26% of correct benefit entitlement as found in the risk-based quality checks conducted.

In terms of the claims checked that were 'correct, first time' (with even £0.01p 'out' being classified as an incorrect assessment), at the end of Quarter 2 2021/22:

- City of Lincoln: 95.26% (261 out of 274 checked), cumulative YTD

These checks are in addition to the significant number of checks also carried out under the audit requirements of the annual Housing Benefit Subsidy claims.



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# Directorate for Communities and Environment - Performance

Service Area	Measure	Current Value	Status	Direction
Food and Health & Safety Enforcement	Percentage of premises fully or broadly compliant with Food Health & Safety inspection	0.00	A	—
Food and Health & Safety Enforcement	Average time from actual date of inspection to achieving compliance	33.21	R	▼
Food and Health & Safety Enforcement	Percentage of food inspections that should have been completed and have been in that time period	0.00	A	—
Development Management (Planning)	Number of applications in the quarter	235	V	—
Development Management (Planning)	End to end time to determine a planning application (Days)	61.91	G	▼
Development Management (Planning)	Number of live planning applications open	135	A	▼
Development Management (Planning)	Percentage of applications approved	97.00	G	—
Development Management (Planning)	Percentage of decisions on planning applications that are subsequently overturned on appeal	0.00	G	—
Development Management (Planning)	Percentage of Non-Major Planning Applications determined within the government target (70% in 8 weeks) measured on a 2-year rolling basis	94.00	G	▲
Development Management (Planning)	Percentage of Major Planning Applications determined within the government target (60% in 13 weeks) measured on a 2-year rolling basis	88.00	A	▲
Private Housing	Average time in weeks from occupational therapy notification to completion of works on site for a DFG grant (all DFG's exc. extensions)	30.80	R	▼
Private Housing	Average time from date of inspection of accommodation to removing a severe hazard to an acceptable level	13.60	V	—
Private Housing	Number of empty homes brought back into use	12	A	▲
Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Number of cases received in the quarter (ASB)	88	V	—
Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Number of cases closed in the quarter	849	V	—
Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Number of live cases open at the end of the quarter	189	G	▲
Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team	Satisfaction of complainants relating to how the complaint was handled	0.00	A	—

Sport & Leisure	Quarterly visitor numbers to Birchwood and Yarborough Leisure Centres	122,034	R	▲
Sport & Leisure	Artificial Grass Pitch usage at Yarborough Leisure Centre & Birchwood Leisure Centre	790.00	G	▼
CCTV	Total number of incidents handled by CCTV operators	2,665	V	▬
Waste & Recycling	Percentage of waste recycled or composted	35.39	R	▲
Waste & Recycling	Contractor points achieved against target standards specified in contract - Waste Management	125	A	▲
Street Cleansing	Contractor points achieved against target standards specified in contract - Street Cleansing	75	A	▲
Grounds Maintenance	Contractor points achieved against target standards specified in contract - Grounds Maintenance	75	A	▼
Allotments	Percentage occupancy of allotment plots	97.00	G	▬
Parking Services	Overall percentage utilisation of all car parks	40.00	R	▲
Parking Services	Number of off-street charged parking spaces	3,796	V	▬
Licensing	Total number of committee referrals (for all licensing functions)	6	V	▬
Licensing	Total number of enforcement actions (revocations, suspensions and prosecutions)		V	▬

## Annual Measures

Service Area	Measure ID	Measure	Current Value	Status
Grounds Maintenance	GM 2	Satisfaction with play areas, parks and open spaces (collected via Citizens' Panel)	77.80	R
Street Cleansing	SC 2	Satisfaction that public land and public highways are kept clear of litter and refuse (Street Cleansing) (collected via Citizens' Panel)	76.00	A

## **Food Health and Safety**

The food premise inspection programme has continued to be partially suspended this quarter due to the pandemic and lockdown measures. A recovery plan was drawn up at the end of September under the instruction of the Food Standards Agency, which has essentially reset the inspections that are overdue, it is anticipated feedback will be provided on this in Q3. The Food Standards Agency provided a framework on how Local Authorities should manage food official controls, focused on new premises, those food premises where the risk to public health is high or where the risk is unknown.

Full recovery of the inspection programme is not expected by the FSA until March 2023 but under the new guidelines, 81 inspections have been carried out focusing on new businesses and also focusing on those businesses that present the greatest risk to public health, typically evening economy takeaways and restaurants.

We are currently showing red status against the measure of time taken from the inspection to achieving compliance – this is due to resource pressures within the team. However, we have now been able to recruit a newly qualified officer who is undergoing local training currently and will be able to undertake official controls within 6 months.

### **Development Management (Planning)**

Overall, Development Management has shown excellent progress in Q2, with four of their six measures above target and the other two on target.

In Q2, there were 235 planning applications submitted which remains relatively high and continues to show an increased confidence in the development sector. It took 61.91 days on average to determine the outcome of live planning applications, coming in at just under the target of 65 days. Although very slightly increased from Q1, this was due to more major developments being submitted which do take a little longer. The number of planning applications that are still being worked on increased slightly from 128 to 135 this quarter but remains in the acceptable range for this measure and continues to remain consistent and within current resource levels.

Performance also continues to be high on applications approved standing at 97% which maintains the positive approach of the service with no appeals being overturned in Q2 – reflecting the quality and robustness of the decisions made

The key measures required by central government are the percentage of non-major and major planning applications determined within the government target).

In Q2, 94% of our non-major planning applications and 88% of our major planning applications were determined within government targets, comfortably above the required national threshold for both non-majors and majors.

## **Private Sector Housing**

We are now starting to see an improvement in the numbers of disabled facility applications that can be taken forwards – with 24 applications progressed in Q2, completed in an average of 30.8 weeks each, which (in Q2 alone) is outside of the 19–26-week target boundary. There was an increase in the average time from an Occupational Therapy notification to the works being completed, this has been around the challenge of having a valid application submitted and approving the application. Delays for some cases have been where we have been awaiting the property owner's permission to be able to carry out the adaptation to the property. The average time once the application has been approved to completion of works for Q1 and Q2 year to date was only 14 weeks.

Q2 has seen the resumption of collection on the “Average time from date of inspection of accommodation to removing a severe hazard to an acceptable level”, with 38 disrepair and condition cases resolved. It is important to note that some of these cases have taken longer to resolve with a reduced number of onsite inspections taking place over this period, however it is anticipated this will resume later on in the year whilst ensuring COVID19 practises are adhered to.

In Q2, twelve empty properties have been returned to use year to date – however, we anticipate that we will be able to build on this in Q3 and Q4 as the Empty Homes Officer has now been returned to his substantive role again, although as this is a shared position, this is still only 2.5 days a week. One of the tasks for this officer to conduct during 2022/23 will be to review the Empty Homes Strategy, with the aim of introducing more actions and ways of enforcement. This will also include a review of the targets.

There are currently 356 privately owned properties which have been empty and unoccupied for 6 months and of those 122 have been empty for more than a 2-year period. Of these there are 23 properties that fall within the threshold of being affected by the council tax additional premium charge of 300% for any property over 10 years empty, which commenced from 1st April 2021.

## **Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour (PP-ASB)**

The number of ASB cases received in any quarter is a volumetric measure (meaning it is not something the team can influence), but this has decreased from Q1's figure of 115 to 88 in Q2, which is in line with what is normally expected and indicates demand is returning to normal following previously higher figures during the lockdown periods.

Q2 has seen a high number of service requests received with a total of 1,065 which continues to reflect the consistent high demand on the team, which is significantly higher than the same period in 2020/2021. The number of cases closed this quarter stands at 849 which is proportionate to this level. The number of cases still open in Q2 is 189 which is the normal amount expected and still falls well within the target of 220.

Satisfaction of complainants relating to how the complaint was handled is not currently being collected in Customer Services team and a possible new methodology is being reviewed within the One Council programme.



## **Sports and Leisure**

In Q2, visitor numbers to leisure centres continued to increase reporting at 122,034 which is more than double those in the previous quarter. (Yarborough has gone up 47,606 visits on last quarter and Birchwood has gone up 14,319 visits on Q1).

Members will know that leisure centres were impacted significantly during the key Covid lockdown times with only very short periods where they were able to open at all, however due to pandemic restrictions easing further, numbers are starting to return to an expected rate. It is important to note that figures are still below pre-pandemic levels and that national resistance to visiting gyms is having an affect across the country due to visitors diverting away to other forms of exercise during the pandemic.

Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) usage at Yarborough Leisure Centre & Birchwood Leisure Centre, has seen 790 hours of use over the last quarter. We are happy to report that clubs have returned to Birchwood and Yarborough since the lockdown has been lifted on outside spaces, however Q2 accounts for only the start of the football season and it is anticipated this figure will grow further as the season continues.

## **Waste and Recycling**

Note that the quarterly data presented here is, as usual, lagged by one quarter and thus refers to Q1 2021/22. In Q1, 17.11% of waste was recycled and 18.28% of waste was composted equating to an overall figure of 35.39% of waste being composted or recycled. The overall amount of waste disposed reduced by 3.5%, which is a positive result. It is important to note that composting tonnages are very much related to the weather and will vary seasonally.

Contractor points given against target standards for waste management remained on target this quarter falling within the target boundary of 50-150 reporting at 125 points collectively with 55 points in July, 40 points in August and 30 points in September.

## **Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance**

We have recorded 75 contractor points against the Street Cleansing team and 75 against the Grounds Maintenance team. This means that both teams are within their target boundaries.

Annual satisfaction levels of play areas, parks and open spaces collected via the Lincoln Citizens' Panel has reported at 77.8% of respondents being satisfied overall with how these are managed. This takes this measure into a red status, but it is important to note that this figure is not a reflection on the Grounds Maintenance service as a whole and from comments provided through the survey, respondents perceived that there was a significant impact of excessive littering on these areas over the Covid period as user numbers were considerably higher than normal.

## **Allotments**

As at the end of Q2, 1,057 plots of a total 1,147 were let. Of the 1,147 total plots, 1,091 plots are currently lettable, which equates to an overall occupancy rate of 97% which falls comfortably above the target of 88%.

The demand for allotment tenancies continues to operate at a steady rate and all allotment sites currently have waiting lists for plots now; so when plots become available the team are working towards re-letting of plots as quickly as possible.

## **Parking**

The car parks and bus station have remained open during all the lockdown periods. We are now experiencing an increase in demand for car parking due to increased footfall as non-essential shops have re-opened and workers have returned to the office. The team continue to ensure a clean, safe experience for customers and staff.

The overall percentage utilisation of all car parks, obviously continues to be at a much lower level in comparison to previous years, reporting at 40% over Q2, but this is an improvement on the 36% seen in Q1, due to an increase in both shoppers and workers returning to the office.



British

Services



Water

# Directorate of Housing and Investment Performance

Service Area	Measure	Current Value	Status	Direction
Housing Investment	Percentage of council properties that are not at the 'Decent Homes' standard (excluding refusals)	1.50	R	▲
Housing Investment	Number of properties 'not decent' as a result of tenant's refusal to allow work (excluding referrals)	188	V	▬
Housing Investment	Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.26	R	▼
Control Centre	Percentage of Lincare Housing Assistance calls answered within 60 seconds	98.25	A	▬
Rent Collection	Rent collected as a proportion of rent owed	97.61	G	▼
Rent Collection	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit	4.88	R	▼
Housing Solutions	The number of people currently on the housing list	1,338	V	▬
Housing Solutions	The number of people approaching the council as homeless	461	V	▬
Housing Solutions	Successful preventions and relief of homelessness against total number of homelessness approaches	45.93	R	▼
Housing Voids	Percentage of rent lost through dwelling being vacant	1.37	R	▼
Housing Voids	Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings - standard re-lets	44.83	R	▼
Housing Voids	Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings (including major works)	53.09	R	▼
Housing Maintenance	Percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	91.74	R	▼
Housing Maintenance	Percentage of repairs fixed first time (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	91.95	A	▼
Housing Maintenance	Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	99.40	G	▲
Business Development	Number of users logged into the on-line self-service system this quarter	10,515	G	▼
IT	Number of calls logged to IT helpdesk	927	V	▬
IT	Percentage of first-time fixes	56.30	V	▬

Housing Services are operating in unprecedented times. Whilst as a nation we are emerging from the pandemic and the fallout of Brexit, the impact on these two events is still being felt across the department and, as everything we do in terms of service delivery is in some way connected, no area is immune from impacts.

At this time, we have record levels of applications for our housing register, we have very high-level requests for homeless support, and we are still obliged to let properties to the those deemed most needy of housing (usually Rough Sleepers or those in danger of being homeless). We have a backlog of voids in our system due to the Covid restrictions and the contraction of the workforce as people stayed at home due to the risks associated with their underlying health conditions. This backlog is added to week on week as the council continues to have a high level of tenancies ending as a result of:

- people now seeking to move post pandemic,
- sadly an unprecedented number of deaths in our properties
- people leaving due to other more restrictive reasons such as being detained in prison by the courts.

Vacancies of this nature are difficult to move quickly through the void process as the council is required to enact legal provisions to gain access to the properties, this can take a great deal of time. We are also aware that many of our tenancies now end much earlier and quicker than previously due to the fact we are letting many one-bedroom properties to vulnerable people who have high levels of need and very chaotic lives which restricts their ability to maintain their tenancies.

Additionally the Council made the decision to bid for external grant from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and the Rough Sleeping Accommodation programme. These bids were successful and as a result the council has received matched funding to provide 30 units of move in accommodation across the City to alleviate the pressure on temporary accommodation and negate the use of bed and breakfast facilities. Whilst this has been successful and consequently saved the general fund huge costs the pressure has fallen on HRS to bring these 30 properties up to letting standards before they can be occupied. This has added to the numbers being managed through the void process.

Unfortunately, in the summer our designated contractor for voids went into administration at short notice leaving us without a key resource to respond to growing void numbers.

Housing Repairs Service are currently carrying 15 staff vacancies, this is 20% of our workforce. This is largely as a result of lifestyle changes, retirement and offers of more lucrative employment in the private sector. We are trying to fill this productivity gap with local sub-contractors however, they are struggling with the same labour shortages. Any contracts awarded to help alleviate the system are now at hugely inflated prices which reflects the sector as a whole. A lack of our own labour resource also compounds our ability to respond to the growing number of voids in our system.

It should also be noted that we also have vacancies in ancillary support teams such as resource planners, housing officers, caretakers, in the safety advisory team, resident involvement team as well as long-term sickness in key areas.

We continue to struggle with the materials supply chain. Although we have an effective working relationship with our managed stores provider, they are only available to provide what is made available to them from suppliers, this is hampered by materials being effectively rationed in order that the limited supply is equally distributed across the sector.

The labour and materials shortages have an equal impact on our repairs process. Certain types of repairs are unavoidably delayed e.g. Plastering, Electrical works. It should be stated that all emergency repairs are responded to and 99% of 3-day repairs completed on time with an average turnaround time of 2.5 days.

These difficulties have a knock-on effect on the number of phone calls, emails etc. the council gets from customers chasing resolution to repairs issues and housing registrations and allocations. This in turn results in more complaints and member enquiries. Which all divert officer resource from dealing with the problems that are driving the correspondence.

Additionally we are now seeing sickness levels increase as staff start to feel the effects of responding to the pandemic and are dealing with record levels of demand with a decreasing resource base of staff.

The rent debit is equally under pressure as a result of tenants struggling to pay during the pandemic and the courts system being effectively halted until very recently. Despite direct action through moving rent-free weeks and offering hardship payments uncollected debt is growing. At this stage eviction is not the preferred solution as this adds pressure in other areas of the housing system – not least voids and homelessness.

Ordinarily, in a normal year, we could see one or two of these issues emerge unfortunately we can see that we have been hit by many coming together at one time which is having a fundamental effect on service delivery.

The Housing Management Team have instigated a range of measures aimed at combating the areas and issues that the Council has some control or influence over:-

- We have engaged four local subcontractors to support the void process
- We have instigated different recruitment processes; advertising in different areas and using different channels, offering fixed term and variable contracts as well as extolling the benefits of working in the public sector (sick pay, pensions, holiday entitlement etc.)
- We have looked at the data we have on why properties are becoming void to effectively see if we can slow down the flow into the void system
- We have assessed the feasibility of lowering the void standards so less works need be done prior to sign up, with a commitment to complete works once the tenancy is initiated. [At this stage we have ruled this one out.]
- We are seeking to invest in tenancy sustainment officers to help new tenants, particularly those from vulnerable groups, manage and effectively maintain their tenancy
- We have done detailed analysis of what is driving our void process and now can look to head off any property entering the system if at all possible
- We are using the legal process to access properties where tenants have refused access for gas and electrical testing

- We have sourced new contractors to pick up issues such as fire door upgrades that were left outstanding by our previous investment contractor
- We have increased communications in the local media making tenants and the wider public aware of the operating constraints we are facing
- We have worked with the Lincoln Tenants Panel on messaging through their channels
- We have worked with finance colleagues on uplifting recharge rates to reflect the higher construction sector
- We have added further temporary resource to our housing solutions team to alleviate pressure on the application process for the housing register
- We continue to bring move on accommodation into our stock to reduce the need to use B&B accommodation and relieve the pressure on Temporary Accommodation which is acute at this time
- We have moved the rent-free weeks forward, and offered hardship payments to tenants struggling to pay their rent as a result of Covid 19
- We have re-introduced home visits for those tenants in arrears

Effective financial management of both the HR and the HRS trading account has put us in a position that will allow us to weather this “storm” in the short term. Many of the actions taken above will start to have an impact on these issues in the coming weeks and months but may not be enough to turn service and financial performance by the year end.

A cross departmental short life working group has been established which will report to CMT monthly in order to consider what short term actions can be taken to improve the position in the coming weeks and months.

As always we have included separate commentary against each service – but this summary covers most of the effects that Housing teams are facing at this moment.

## **Housing Investment**

The percentage of council properties that are not at the 'Decent Homes' standard (excluding refusals) has improved from the 2.1% reported in Q1 to 1.5% in Q2. This is still a red status as the target that we aim for is within 1%

The replacement door programme has now come on stream and is beginning to reduce the number of non-decent properties. However, as previously reported, we are also inspecting a number of doors and identifying further properties needing replacements. Electrical testing has reduced the number of failures due to 'Electrics'

Of the 116 properties failing - they are split :92 doors, 21 Electrics, 2 roofs, 1 window

Long term access issues to carry out electrical testing persist, despite attempts working across the council to gain entry. Tenants have the option to refuse improvement works, with various reasons for refusal offered such as health issues and a lack of willingness to cooperate. We currently have 188 properties which are considered 'not decent standard' as a result of tenants refusing us entry to complete necessary works, which is down only one on Q1 results.

Housing Investment are currently working on a programme of procurement for the smaller Investment contracts and the areas with the Asset Management Plan that need renewing within the next 1-4 years, this includes door entry, communal doors and fire doors.

The Health and Safety Executive advised that gas servicing must continue throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, so we have continued to follow our gas servicing procedures and as of the end of Q2 have achieved 99.26% properties with a valid gas safety certificate. This is very slightly down on the 99.46% that we achieved in Q1 – but again under the minimum target we have set ourselves of 99.8%. We are still experiencing a small number of failed access cases having not achieved access prior to deadline date for servicing. These outstanding cases are now at the legal referral stage. We do have some failed access from households isolating due to Covid. We continue to work closely with those tenants to rearrange appointments in these circumstances.

To enable us to continue with our gas servicing programme, our contractor revised risk assessments and method statements in accordance with government guidance to ensure the safety of our customers when working within properties. We worked closely with our most vulnerable customers and individually risk assessed those properties, then reviewed when gas servicing appointments would take place.

## **Control Centre**

Lincare has continued to operate its 24/7 telecare services for clients throughout the pandemic. The data from Q2 shows that the percentage of calls responded to within 60 seconds remained within target boundaries - reporting at 98.25%.

## **Rent collection (Tenancy Services)**

Rent collection for quarter two stands at 97.61% which is ahead of its stretch target of 97%. Although income management has been challenging throughout the last 18 months Tenancy Services continues to prioritise rent collection. The rent-free weeks in December 2021 will also have a positive impact on the % of income collected.

Current tenant arrears as a % of the debit stands at 4.88% (c£1.4m), which is behind the target of 3.5 to 4.5%, and higher than the Q1 outturn of 4.2%



As members are aware, the pandemic and the Governments response to ensure that no evictions took place have resulted in arrears rising nationally. Some of the restrictions that have been in place have been removed and the notice period is now 28 days and the Courts have started to hear cases.

If there are no changes to eviction protocols going forward, we would anticipate that performance against this indicator would improve.

### **Housing Solutions**

Since the easing of pandemic restrictions, we have seen a rise in the number of homelessness applications. There were 461 applications in Q2, an increase of 210 (84%) on applications received in Q1.

The percentage of successful preventions against total number of homelessness approaches for Q2 has decreased from 52.4% in Q1 to 45.93% in Q2 against a target of 50-55%, meaning this measure has moved to red status. Prevention work remains difficult, due to the increased numbers of people finding themselves in this position and also it being especially difficult in the private rented sector, due to low numbers of available properties and high rental prices. At the end of September, we had 15 cases that are 'under prevention' and 37 at 'under relief' stage.

Throughout the Covid pandemic we have continued to receive a consistent number of housing applications. We expected this number to increase as restrictions are lifted and furlough and the eviction bans are lifted. At the end of Q2 there were 1338 people on the housing list – up from 1183 in Q1.

### **Housing Voids**

The average number of days to repair properties including major works has increased to 53.09 days on average against the target of 35-38 days, an increase on the 48.17 days taken in Q1. In addition the average number of days to repair standard re-lets this quarter stood at 44.83 days. Both these figures mean that we are currently seeing an increase in the percentage of rent lost through the dwelling being vacant.

As discussed with members, there have been a number of challenges facing the Voids Team when repairing properties. The loss of the Voids contractor has been addressed by the emergency procurement of local and regional companies to work alongside HRS to carry out the works as required to enable the properties to be relet. There has also been a national shortage of materials. This has resulted in additional delays when sourcing materials for properties requiring major works. Examples of materials in short supply include:

- Plasterboard
- Timber products
- Loft insulation
- Adhesives
- Sanitary items

HRS usually carry enough stock to manage for 5 days without the need for a materials order replenishment, however due to the current situation, items such as plasterboard for example, are on "allocation" and could be 4 weeks between deliveries. Availability of building supplies is a very fluid situation and HRS are working with their supplier to minimise disruption, but the market remains difficult.

The Voids Team are working to improve all aspects of the process to ensure the performance improves for year end and a working group involving the AD's and key staff will be driving improvements going forward.

### **Housing Maintenance**

All our repairs' indicators with one exception (see below) are on target or exceeding target. Prioritising repairs for our customers remain our priority and we are striving to ensure that despite difficulties securing some building products and materials, we continue to exceed repairs targets.

Performance for the percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time measure remains below target (of 97%-99%) at 91.74%, having decreased slightly from 91.9% in Q1. Whilst there are some mitigating factors e.g. construction sector wide shortage of materials, difficult recruitment conditions etc, our priority focus is on quickly bringing this important measure back to previous high levels. We have introduced some actions to improve performance including flexible recruitment campaigns, communications on future supply warnings and/or issues to our customers and reviewing the vehicle stocks within our fleet. Once the labour is in place this will be reflected positively in year-end figures.

First time fix performance for urgent and priority repairs remains on target at 91.95% fixed first time. As these are repairs that are required to be completed in either 24 hours or 3 working days, most of these repairs are completed on the first visit with van stock, and without the requirement to raise a follow-on repair to attend at a later date. HRS has been affected by a shortage in some materials, as well as some shortages in the required skillsets.

Performance in Q2 for appointments made and kept remains consistently high at 99.4%. To ensure we operate efficiently we offer a variety of appointment slots via the scheduled repairs pilot, in order to give us and the customer flexibility. We also have the ability to pull appointments forward in agreement with the customer should an earlier appointment be made available, thus ensuring we provide the best service.

### **Business Development**

The number of users logged onto the online self-service system on our City of Lincoln website this quarter dropped slightly to 10,515 (from 11,625 in Q1). There is a slight seasonal effect involved here as there is less immediate demand for services such as council tax and green bin renewals the further into the year we get. However, as part of the One Council work, the IT team is reviewing the current system to make improvements and thus increase take up.

In-house IT – we have seen the number of calls logged by staff to the help desk stay reasonably steady at 927, the slight drop (from 990) may simply be less staff working due to this being a holiday period.

The percentage of calls fixed first time within our IT department has slightly increased to 56.3% (from 53.5% last quarter), we believe this is as a result of improving the 'logging at first point' process.

**KEEP  
LINCOLN  
SAFE**

SPENCER

THE BRIDGE  
CAFE



# Authority Wide Measures

## Health and Wellbeing

Between July and September 2021, the council made 22 Occupational Health referrals.

Also, during July to September 2021, 129 employees participated in the Virgin Pulse Go Challenge, and this year the challenge focused on a range of health and wellbeing initiatives beyond physical activity including weight management, reducing stress, mindfulness, improving sleep, managing finances and acting sustainably. We are currently awaiting the final results of the challenge and therefore headline figures will be available in due course. Although the team competition has ended, the platform remains open until 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 where employees will be able to access any resources and continue to create habit/step challenges for themselves and/or as part of a group.

In due course the council will be looking to raise awareness of World Mental Health day and Menopause awareness week. In addition, the HR team will be shortly be rolling out Mental Health briefings for Team Leaders and above.

## Sickness performance

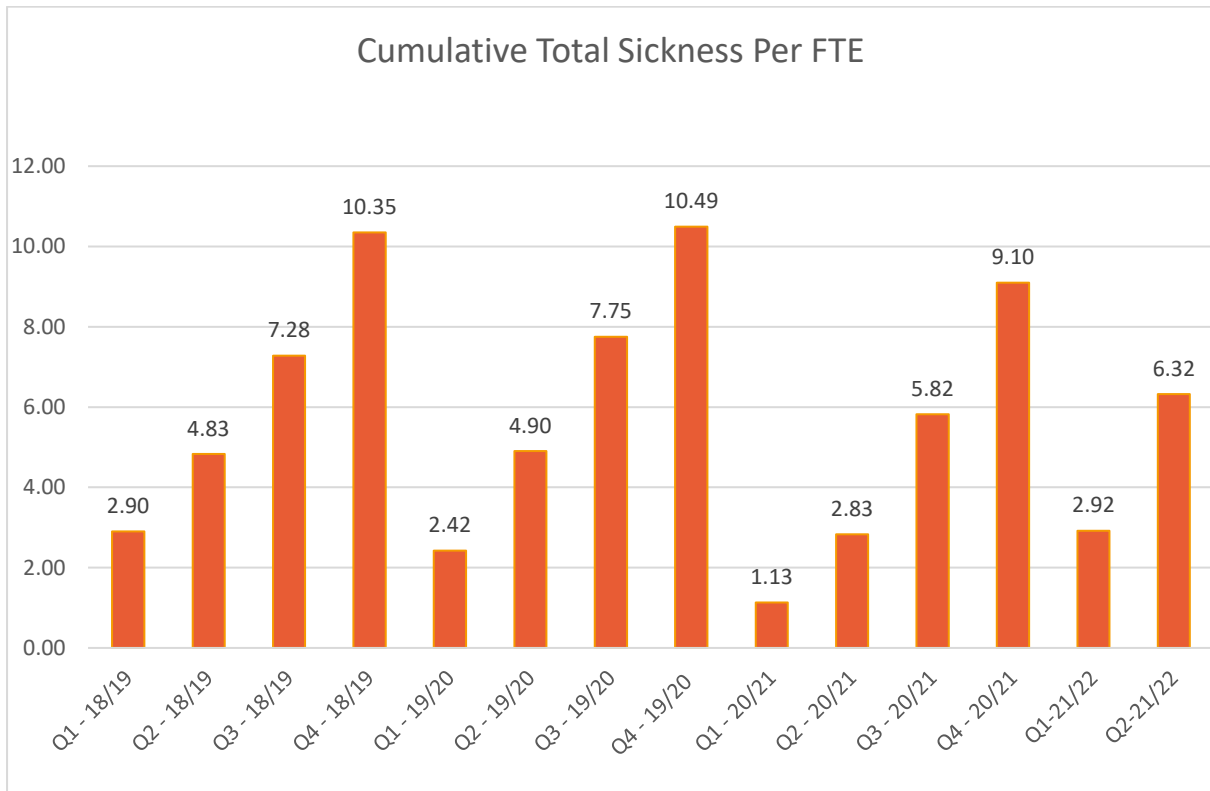
Overall average sickness absence rate of 3.40 days per FTE has risen against the same quarter in 2020/21, where it stood at 2.83 days per FTE, and is now significantly higher than the data from the previous two years before the Covid effect.

However, it is worth noting that whilst short term sickness is down year on year by 0.05, the long-term sickness figure is up by 2.81 days per FTE compared to 2020/21. CMT have noted the increase in Long-term sickness and have commissioned a piece of work from HR to look into this, including regular reports. This will include preventative work as well as long-term sickness management and will be shared with all Assistant Directors and Service Managers

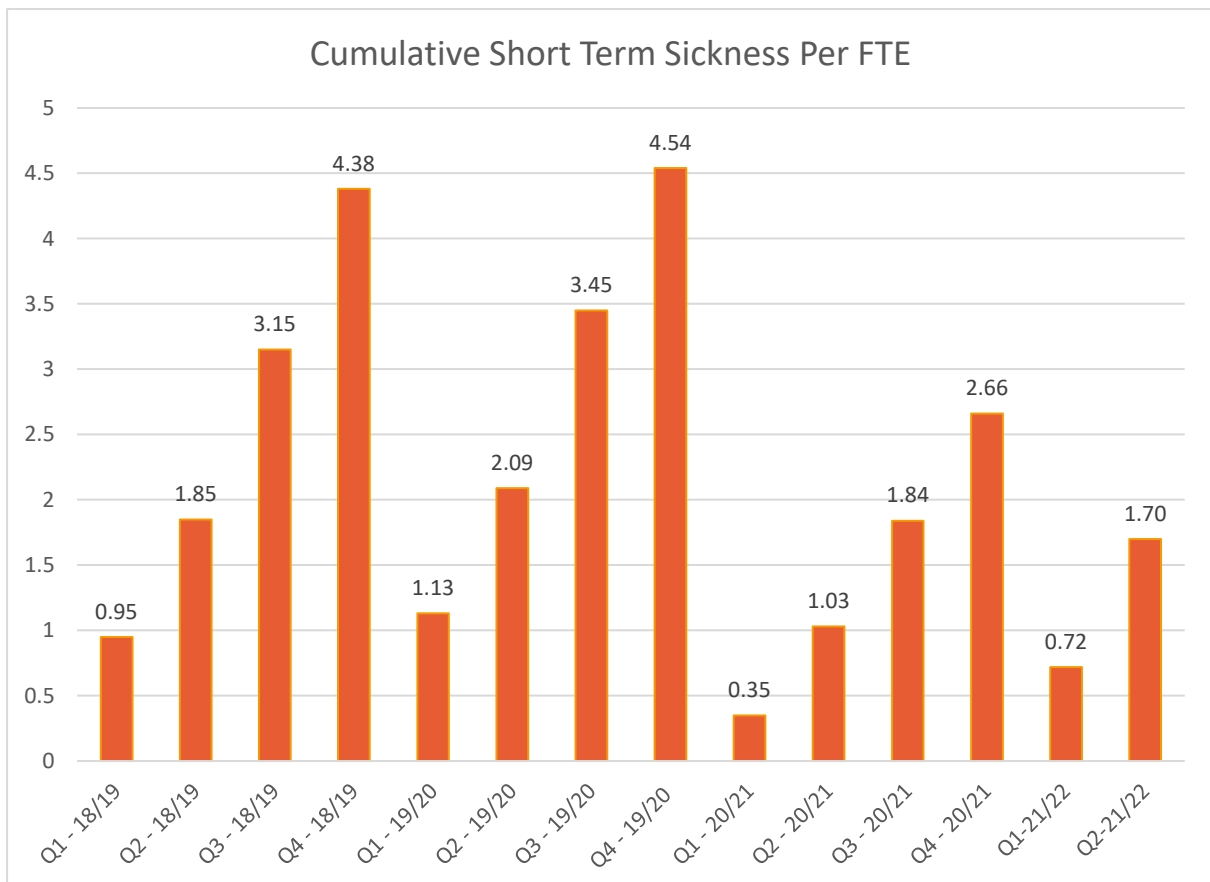
### Q2 2021/22 ONLY

Directorate	CX (Excluding Apprentices)	DCE	DMD	DHI	Total (Excluding Apprentices)	Apprentice Sickness
Short Term Days Lost	158	95.5	9	267	529.5	2
Long Term Days Lost	290	380	0	631	1,301	0
Total days lost	448	475.5	9	898	1,830.5	2
Number of FTE	169.6	135.97	14.26	218.38	538.21	4
Average Short-Term Days lost per FTE	0.93	0.70	0.63	1.22	0.98	0.50
Average Long-Term Days lost per FTE	1.71	2.79	0.00	2.89	2.42	0.00
Average Total Days lost per FTE	2.64	3.49	0.63	4.11	3.40	0.50

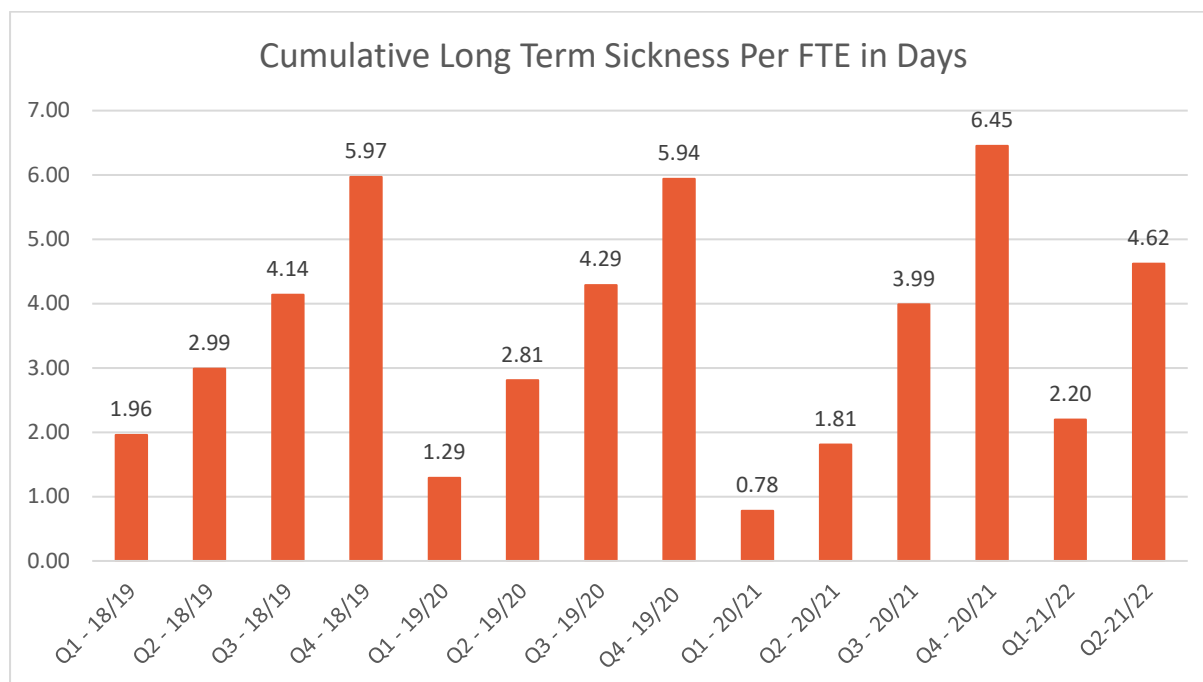
## Cumulative Total Sickness Per FTE (excluding apprentices)



## Cumulative Short-Term Sickness Per FTE in Days



## Cumulative Long-Term Sickness Per FTE in Days



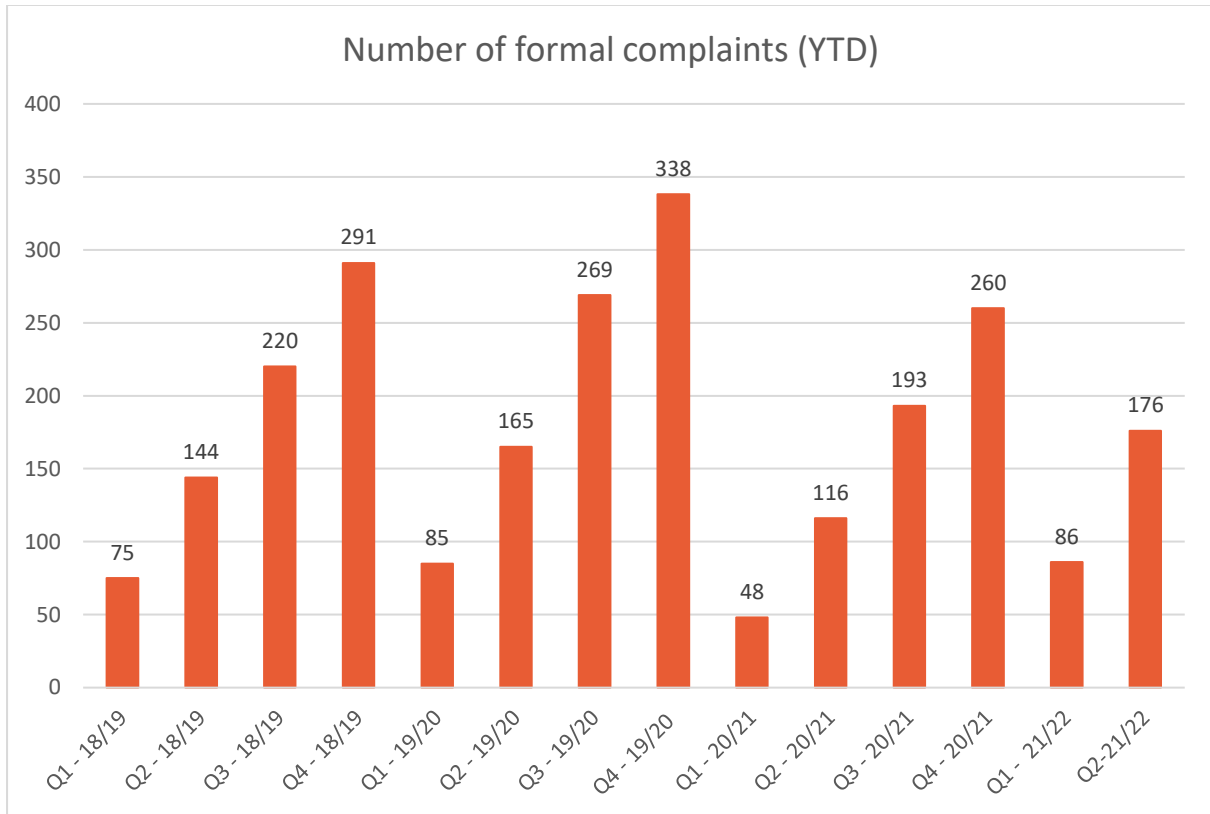
## Complaints Performance

In Quarter two there were 90 complaints investigated, which although higher than last year Q2 – is still under previous years. Following a review of complaints, we have now instigated targets for the two stages of complaints – Stage 1 - to be completed within 10 days and stage 2 to be completed within 20 days. The percentage of responses to formal complaints within target time across all directorates is 57% year to date. In quarter two, we had no LGO complaints decided

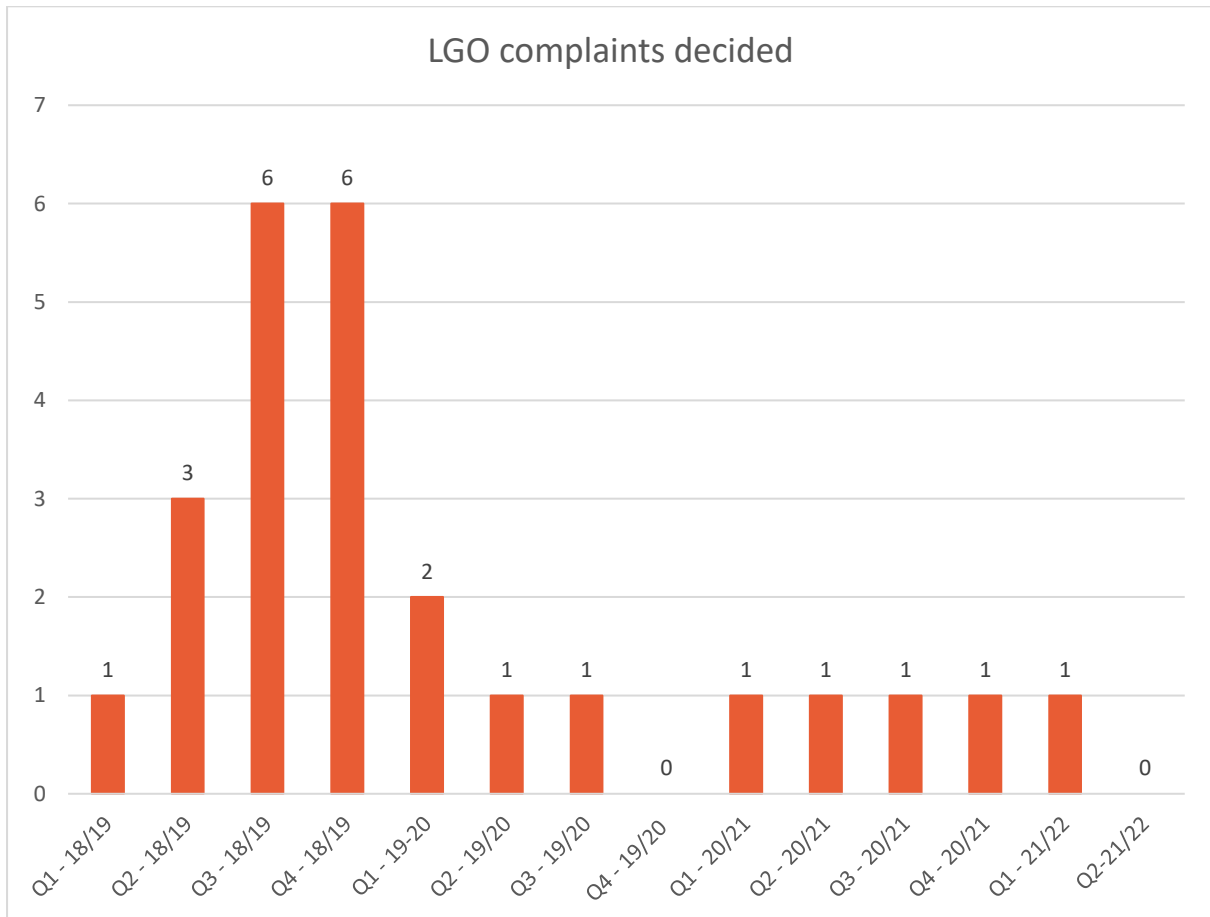
	CX	DCE	DMD	DHI	TOTAL
<b>Number of Formal complaints dealt with this quarter</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Number of Formal complaints Upheld this quarter</b>	<b>2 (50%)</b>	<b>3 (27%)</b>	<b>1 (100%)</b>	<b>36 (49%)</b>	<b>42 (47%)</b>
<b>YTD total number of complaints investigated Cumulative (Q2)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>YTD Number of Formal complaints Upheld</b>	<b>7 (50%)</b>	<b>7 (25%)</b>	<b>2 (66%)</b>	<b>71 (54%)</b>	<b>87 (49%)</b>
<b>% of responses within target time this quarter</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>% of responses within target time YTD</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>LGO complaints decided</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



## Number of formal complaints (YTD)



## Local Government Ombudsman Complaints Decided in Q2 2021/22





## Resource Information

The total number of FTE employees (excluding apprentices) at the end of Q2 was 538.21 with an average of 4 apprentices over the period. In terms of the level of vacancies at Q2 - budgeted establishment unfilled positions (FTE) stood at 69 FTE. It should be noted that the Council are actively recruiting 32.03 FTE, with a strong focus on essential and business critical roles due to the financial environment.

The percentage of staff turnover at the end of quarter two was 2.29% (excluding apprentices). Appraisals have now been restarted as of April 2021 with an extended deadline of September 2021 and figures reported below are for Q1 and Q2 cumulatively.

Directorate	CX (Excluding Apprentices)	DCE	DMD	DHI	Total (Excluding Apprentices)
<b>Number of FTE employees</b>	<b>169.60</b>	<b>135.97</b>	<b>14.26</b>	<b>218.38</b>	<b>538.21</b>
<b>Average number of apprentices (as at quarter end)</b>	<b>Authority Wide</b>				<b>4</b>
<b>Percentage of staff turnover</b>	<b>Authority Wide</b>				<b>2.29%</b>
<b>Total number of FTE vacancies (in i-Trent)</b>	<b>Authority Wide</b>				<b>69.00</b>
<b>Active vacancies which are being recruited (FTE)</b>	<b>Authority Wide</b>				<b>32.03</b>

### Appraisals completed as of Q2 2021/22

Please note the following appraisal figures are based upon the number of appraisals completed in Q1-Q2 versus the number of employees at the start of Q1.

Directorate	CX (Excluding Apprentices)	DCE	DMD	DHI	Total (Excluding Apprentices)
<b>% of appraisals completed</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>26%</b>	