

Caerphilly Homes Directorate Performance Assessment

2020/21 End of Year Update

Please select a section of your choice:

Summary & Priorities



Performance 1



Performance 2



Performance 3



Additional Public Accountability Measures



Customer Intelligence



Resources - Staff



Resources - Finance & Assets



Risk



Well-being Objectives



Conclusion





End of year Summary (October to March 20/21)

Despite the ongoing Covid pandemic throughout 2020, good progress has been made in a number of areas, whilst the service has also supported wider community aims and objectives to support the most vulnerable within our communities during these difficult times. Although the completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme remains a priority, this has unavoidably been delayed as a consequence of the pandemic, which has been recognised by WG with the deadline now having been extended to December 2021 as other authorities are experiencing the same problems. The provision of new affordable housing by Caerphilly Homes continues to be work in progress, with 8 private properties purchased for social rent, Section 106 purchases being progressed for social rent and low cost home ownership, and a number of feasibility schemes being undertaken, including a number whereby additional grant funding bids have been submitted. Commissioning work is also ongoing to undertake an appraisal of all our Housing Revenue Account land assets and consultation ongoing with partners, including the Health Board and Housing Justice on other potential development sites. Partnership working with our Registered Social Landlord organisations also continues to deliver new affordable homes within the borough and this partnership has been further strengthened with the recent signing of an Memorandum Of Understanding. The adaptations team have focussed efforts on the higher priority essential cases for most of the year due to the risks associated with delivering core services to this vulnerable client group. The Private Sector team have however been actively looking at improving ways of supporting the Welsh Government's aim of bringing empty homes back into use and Cabinet have approved the creation of a new Empty Property Team and agreed to support a Valleys Task Force Empty Homes Grant initiative, which is progressing well. Homelessness has been a particular issue this year with the pandemic resulting in an increase in the number of presentations which coincided with the Manager taking early retirement. The recruitment of a replacement manager was delayed but the team has responded positively and professionally to not only maintain services, but react to the increased pressures and demands that they have faced. This has resulted in new emergency temporary accommodation being sourced with the additional support required to manage such facilities to avoid rough sleeping within our county borough. As the pandemic continues however, this is a problem that will increase unless additional suitable accommodation can be sourced.

At an early stage of the pandemic a dedicated financial crisis line was set up by our Rents Team, which has not only assisted and advised our tenants, but also assisted other members of the public including residents and businesses by providing financial advice or referring them for appropriate support. This has been a worrying time for many who face financial hardship for different reasons with our team being a life line for many. This has included reassurance calls that have been undertaken by our staff to numerous tenants some who are known to be vulnerable e.g. older persons, which has often been the only contact some may have had with others outside of their homes. Where required these calls have been followed up with visits or referrals to those in need. Maintaining services whilst operating under the limitations imposed by the Covid guidance has been difficult, but the commitment and support provided by our staff has been excellent and has clearly been appreciated by our customers, although this has also highlighted a need for changes to working practices and the provision of the necessary IT equipment to support agile working and the provision of satisfactory levels of service whilst this crisis continues. Whilst the landlord service previously operated out of four decentralised offices whilst providing centralised services from Tredomen, they were not all suitable for use during Covid restrictions so we have instead operated a centralised Housing Office staffed by a rota of officers from the four Housing offices, providing essential services. All Housing Office staff have worked from home, and have recognised the benefits of agile working, co-location and centralisation. The lease for the Eastern Valley Area Housing Office expired in December 2020 and the decision was taken to close the office, with a view to operating an effective and efficient community focused Area Housing Service with a focus on agile working methods in the communities the office previously served.

Service Priorities	Completion Date	RAG	Progress - Achievements - Comments
To identify General Fund savings proposals to ensure that a balanced budget for the 2020/21 financial year can be approved by Council in February 2020. (Corporate Priority)	Dec-21	●	The required General Fund savings to contribute towards the Mid Term Financial Plan have been accounted for in the current year, but ongoing savings for such a small budget will be extremely difficult to achieve
1a. All council housing is improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020. (links to Well-being Objective)	Dec-21	●	The programme has encountered unavoidable delays due to the Covid pandemic which has been recognised by Welsh Government and an extension to the deadline agreed for December 2021. We are on track to complete in advance of the revised deadline
1b. Implement an asset management strategy to maintain the condition of the housing stock following WHQS (Welsh Housing Quality Standard) attainment (December 2020).	Dec-21	●	The Planned Asset management Strategy has been agreed, but it's implementation delayed due to the Covid pandemic and extension of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme
2. Increase the provision of new, affordable, social housing that meet the 'Lifetime Homes' principles and identified needs, whilst supporting the governments' housing programme.	Ongoing	●	New schemes are ongoing with our Registered Social Landlord partners utilising Social Housing Grant. A total of £4,570,753.00 has been committed during 20/21. This has included spend on a number of energy efficient/Passivhaus schemes. Caerphilly Homes have published a tender for a multi disciplinary consultancy to examine and undertake development appraisals for HRA and General Fund land that may be suitable for residential development. IHP grant funding of £3.1M has been secured from Welsh Government to fund Caerphilly Homes, first Passivhaus developments in Trecenydd and trethomas. Construction is scheduled to begin on both sites in June 2021. 8 new properties are being purchased via S106, including 2 LCHO properties and 6 properties have been purchased for social rent using Phase 2 Homelessness funding.
3. Deliver adaptations to support the health and well-being of people in their homes and maximise the delivery and appropriate use of accessible homes.	Ongoing	●	Due to the Covid pandemic the focus during lockdowns has been on the provision of essential adaptations to assist with hospital discharges and address health and safety issues. More routine works were temporarily suspended due to the vulnerability of this client group. Whilst works have recommenced on addressing the backlog in Q.4 they have been impacted by contractor availability and WG pandemic operational guidelines
4. Increase the supply of housing by supporting opportunities to bring long-term, empty homes back into use.	Ongoing	●	Service Level Agreement signed for Caerphilly Homes to participate in Phase 2 of the Valleys Task Force initiative with funding support agreed by Cabinet to contribute towards the work to bring empty homes back into use and also to establish an empty homes team. 127 VTF applications were received with 983 being progressed. A successful bid for homelessness funding has also resulted in the purchase of 6 properties to add to our housing stock to provide much needed small units of accommodation.
5. Tackle the determinants of poor health and well-being by improving housing conditions in the private sector.	Ongoing	●	Inspections and enforcement activities have been limited to higher priority issues impacting on property conditions due to the ongoing pandemic and associated WG guidance.
6. Prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping.	Ongoing	●	On going pressure in this area of the service due to increased demand as a consequence of the pandemic and a lack of suitable emergency accommodation. Regular meetings being held with WG and successful funding bid resulting in £1m approx. for revenue and capital projects
7. Sustaining tenancies by providing a range of housing related services.	Ongoing	●	Ongoing support being provided remotely in addition to setting up a financial crisis line to assist CCBC residents. £2.458,000 of savings were generated in 20/21 for tenants as a result of support provided on the effects of welfare reform.
8. Help reduce fuel poverty by making homes more energy efficient and providing people with advice on how best to heat their homes.	Ongoing	●	Energy advice continues to be provided and opportunities to access energy funding provided by WG is continually being sought. Success in accessing Arbed funding for the Blackwood area has been achieved this year.

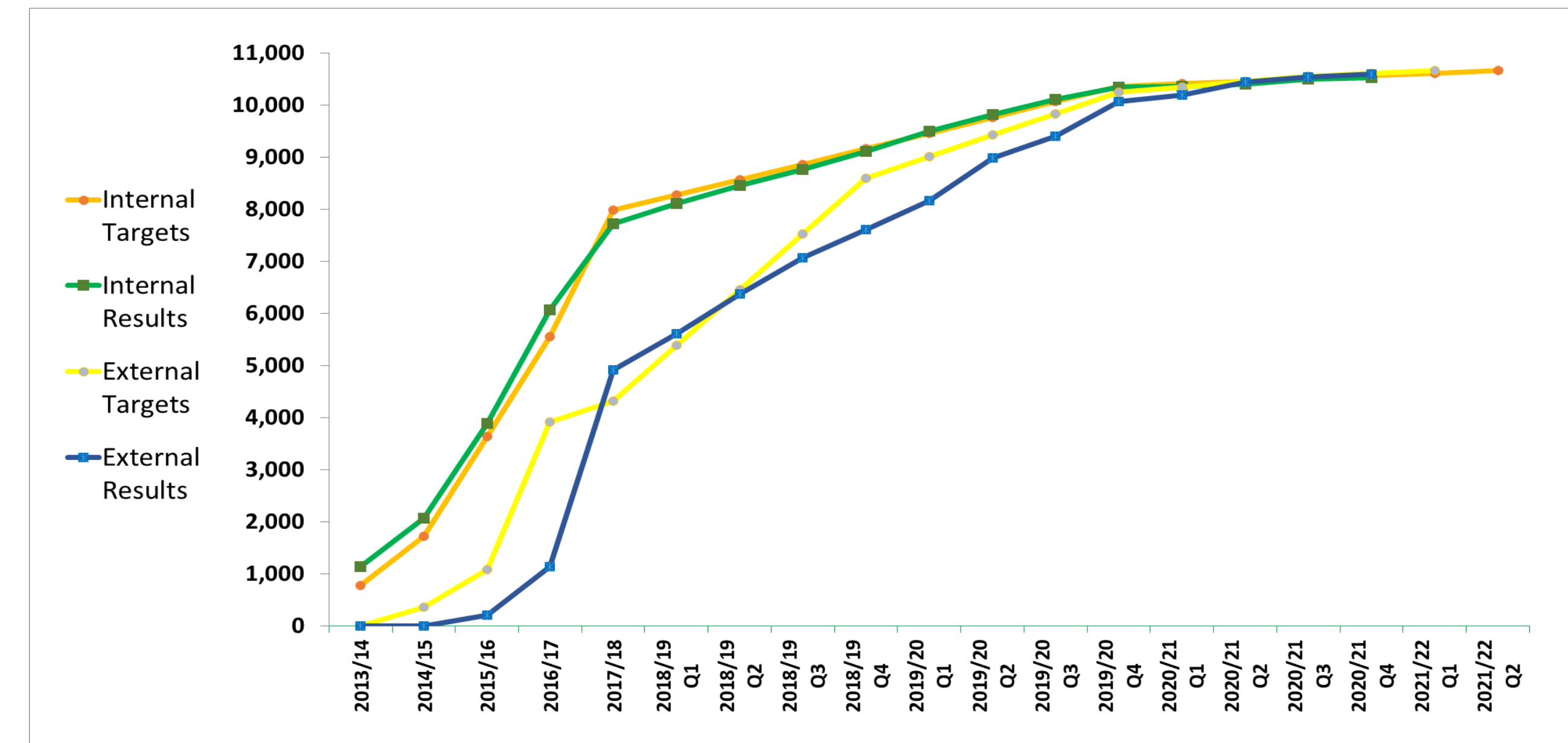
The priorities above link to outcomes in Well-being Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being.

Status	RAG Key	
Black	●	0
Red	●	1
Amber	●	2
Green	●	3

1. All Council Housing is improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)



INTERNAL & EXTERNAL - Programme Profile (Targets & Results Achieved)

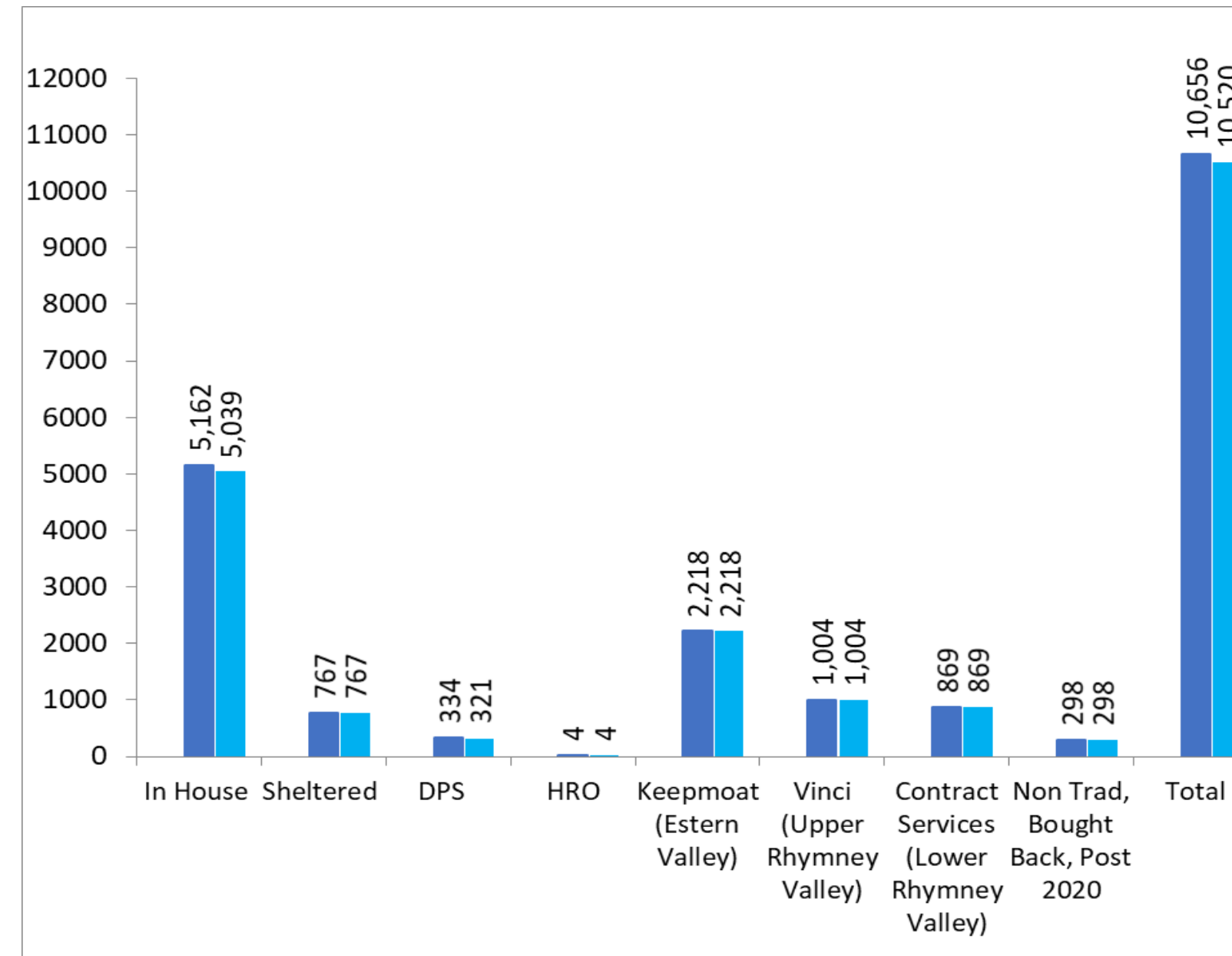


WBO 3 (1a) **2020/21 PAM/038 % of homes that meet the WHQS 99.02%**

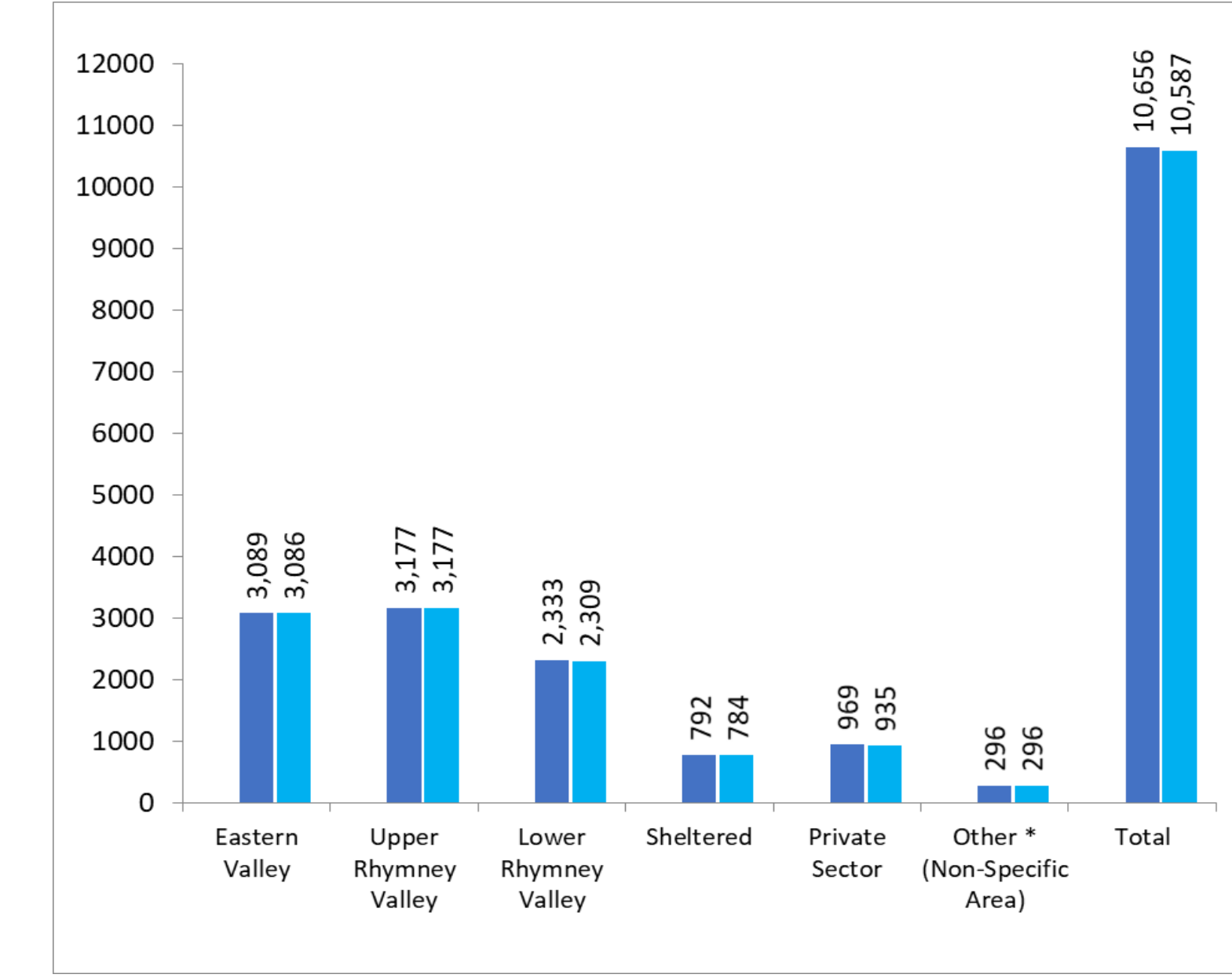
PAM

WBO 3 (Outcome 1a)

Reporting Period	02/04/2021
*INTERNAL Works Programme (Stock v Compliance)	
Internal Target 31/08/21	100.00%
Internal Components (% of stock)	98.72%



Reporting Period	02/04/2021
~ EXTERNAL Works Programme (Stock v Compliance)	
External Target 31/05/21	100.00%
External Components (% of stock)	99.36%



WBO 3 (Outcome 1a)

What is WHQS performance telling us?

Internal works - The internal WHQS programme was suspended for the second time this financial year in December 2020 due to the Pandemic lockdown and work is hoped to re-commence in April 2021 with enhanced risk assessments to adhere to Welsh Government guidance. In this year of the programme 186 internal properties have been made complaint with 136 outstanding. It is anticipated that work will take on average 3 times longer to complete under social distancing regulations and early projections indicate internal compliance will be achieved by the end of August 2021 (pending no further delays from future lockdowns etc). Welsh Government has extended the deadline for WHQS completion to December 2021.

External works - External work re-commenced in Mid May 2020 and 2 contractors worked throughout lockdown with detailed risk assessment issued to Contractors. 535 properties have been made compliant this year on external works with 69 properties outstanding. Early indications suggest external compliance will be achieved by the end of May 2021 (pending no further delays from future lockdowns or adverse weather) ahead of the Welsh Government extended deadline of December 2021. It is important to note that WHQS would have been fully achieved by June 2020, ahead of the original deadline of December 2020, if the global pandemic had not occurred.

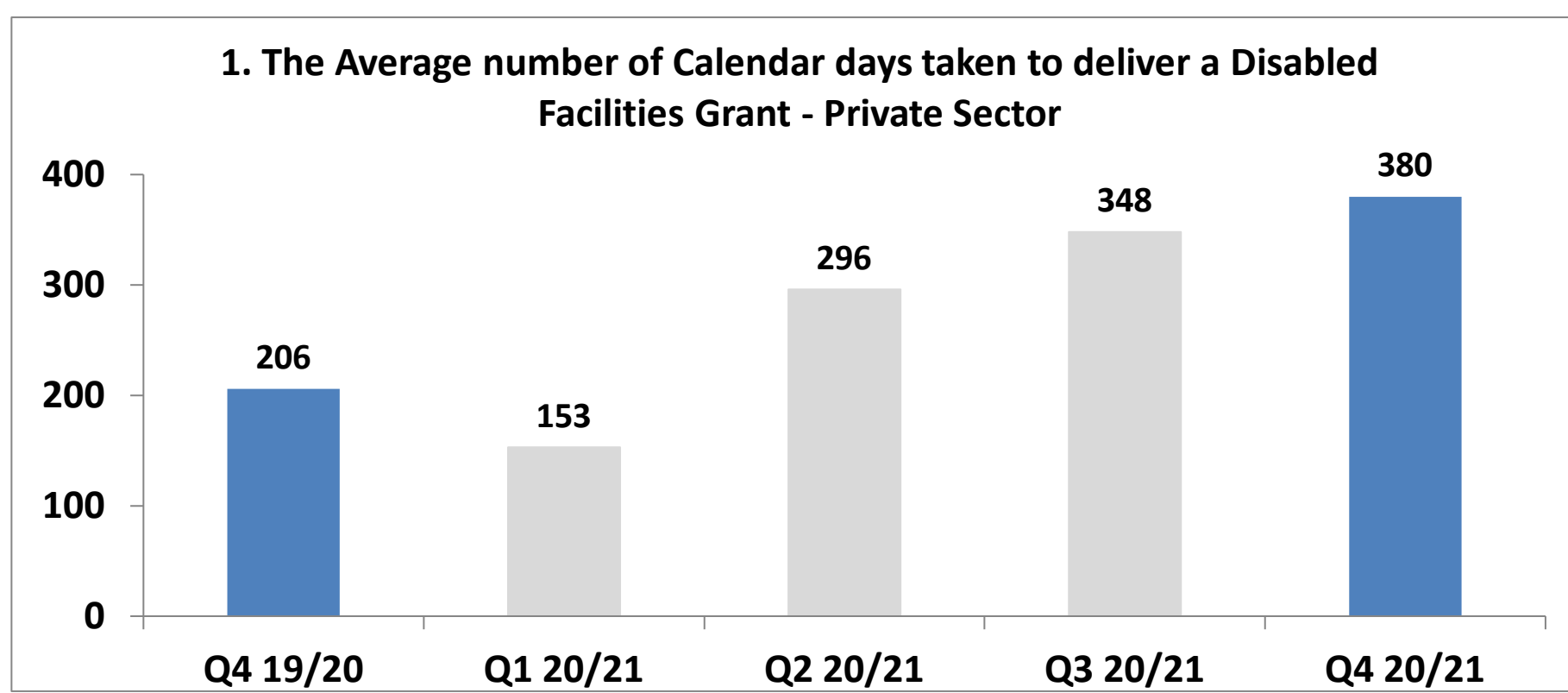
The charts above, have been based on properties surveyed, improvement works undertaken, post-works inspections and portfolio updates, focusing on the following WHQS components:

Internal Works: 4 main elements - Kitchens, Bathrooms, Heating & Electrics.

External Works: 10 main elements - Boundary walls, Doors, Drainage works, Fences/Railings/Gates, Curtilage works, Paths/Drives, Roofs, Stores/Sheds/Outbuildings, Windows & property skin Other specialist works/improvements are also undertaken in conjunction with the WHQS Programme, such as Adaptations to meet the specific needs of the tenants

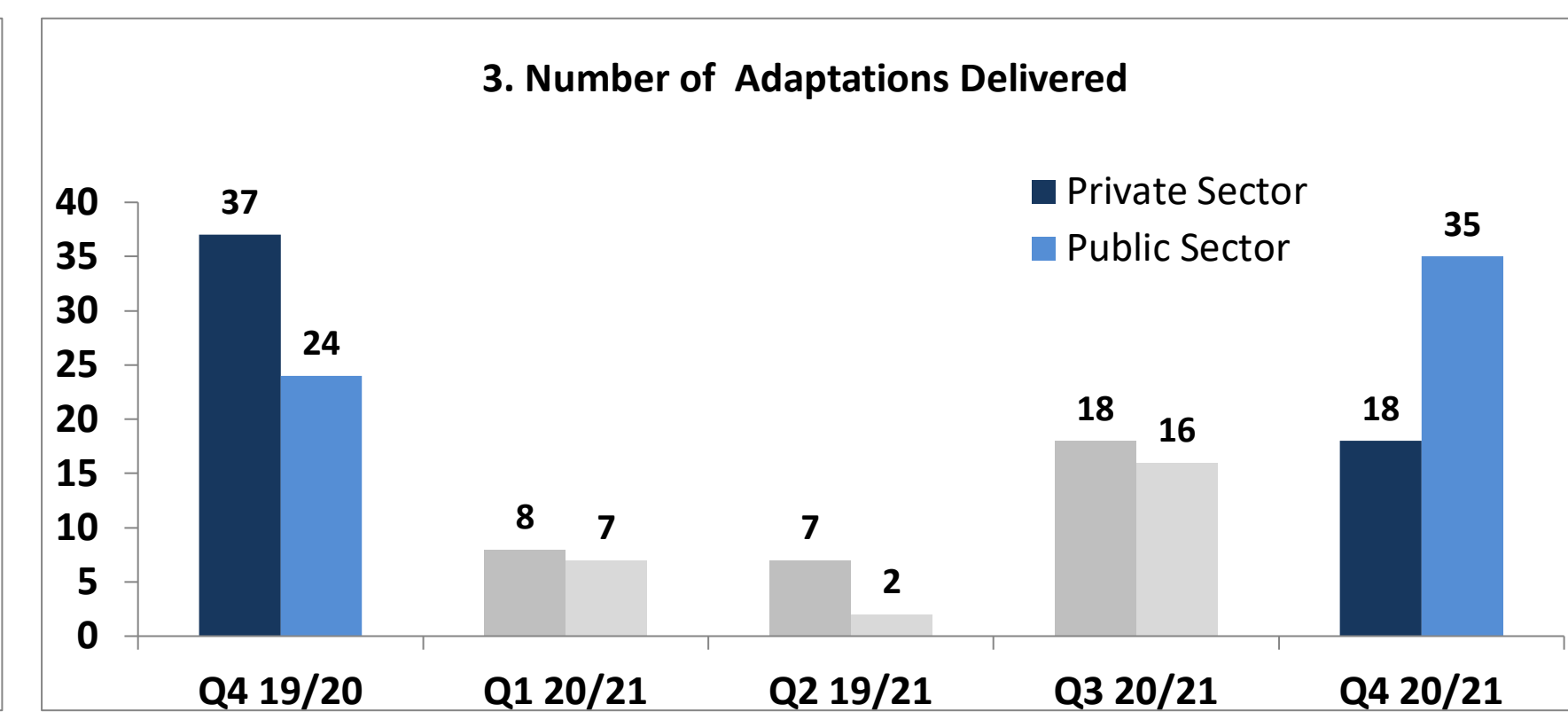
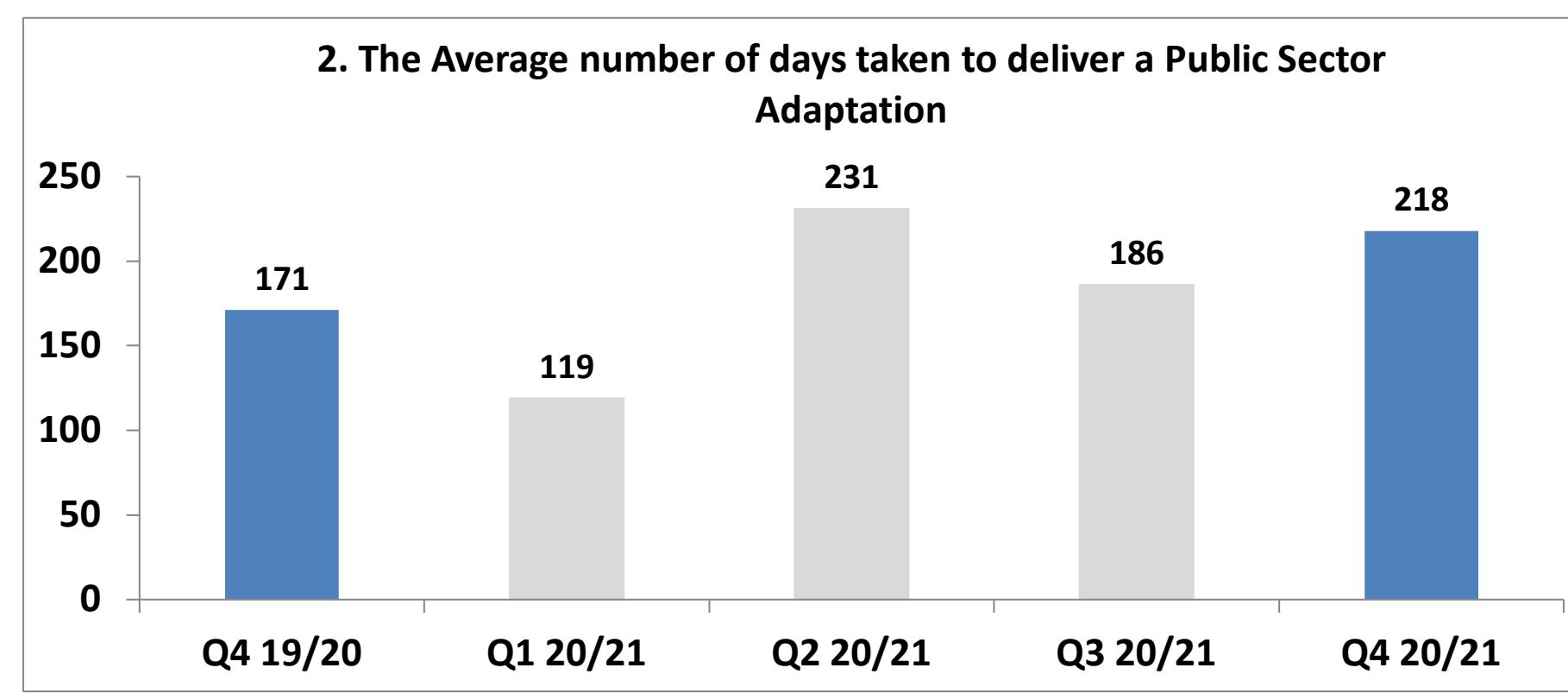


3. Deliver adaptations to support the health and well-being of people in their homes & maximise the delivery and appropriate use of accessible homes

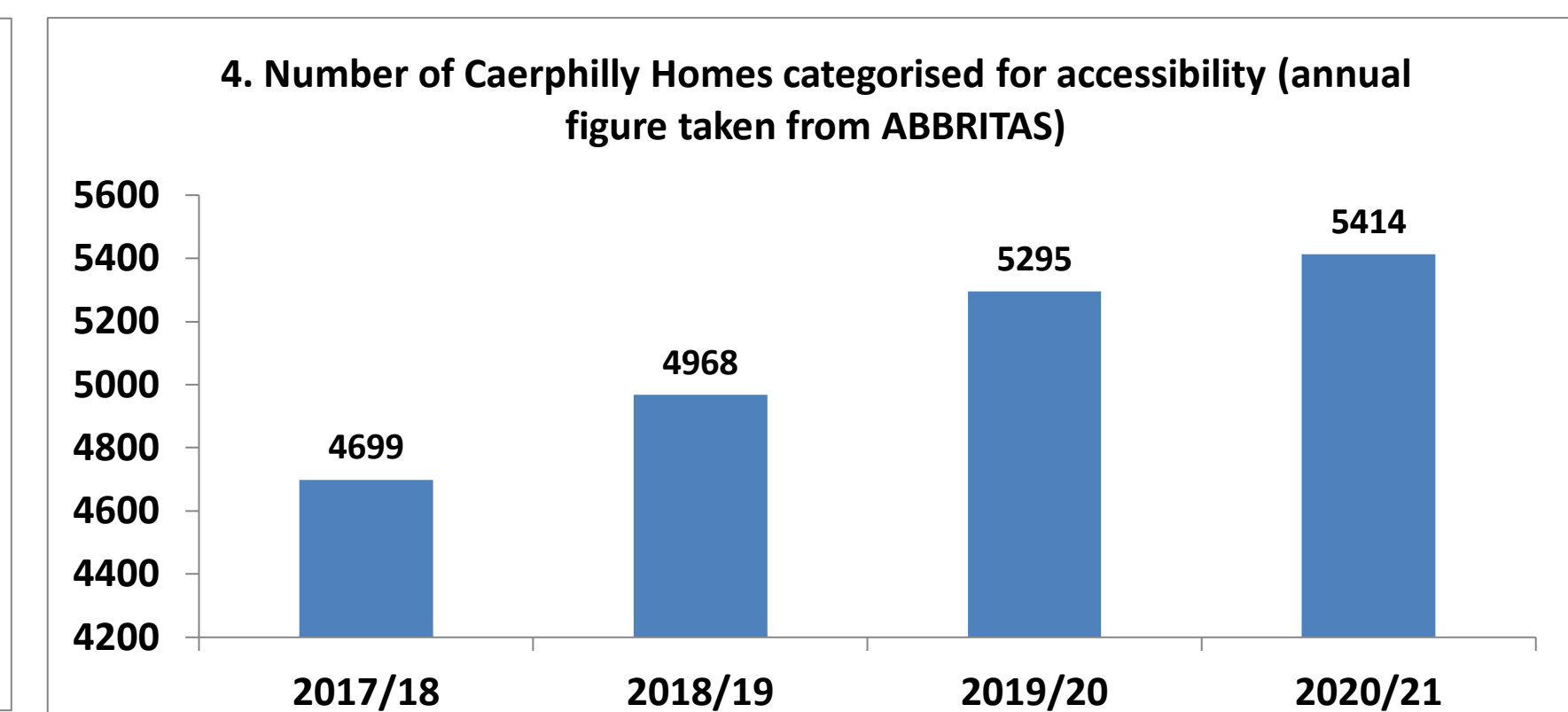


2020/21 Annual Average figure was 321.6

PAM/015

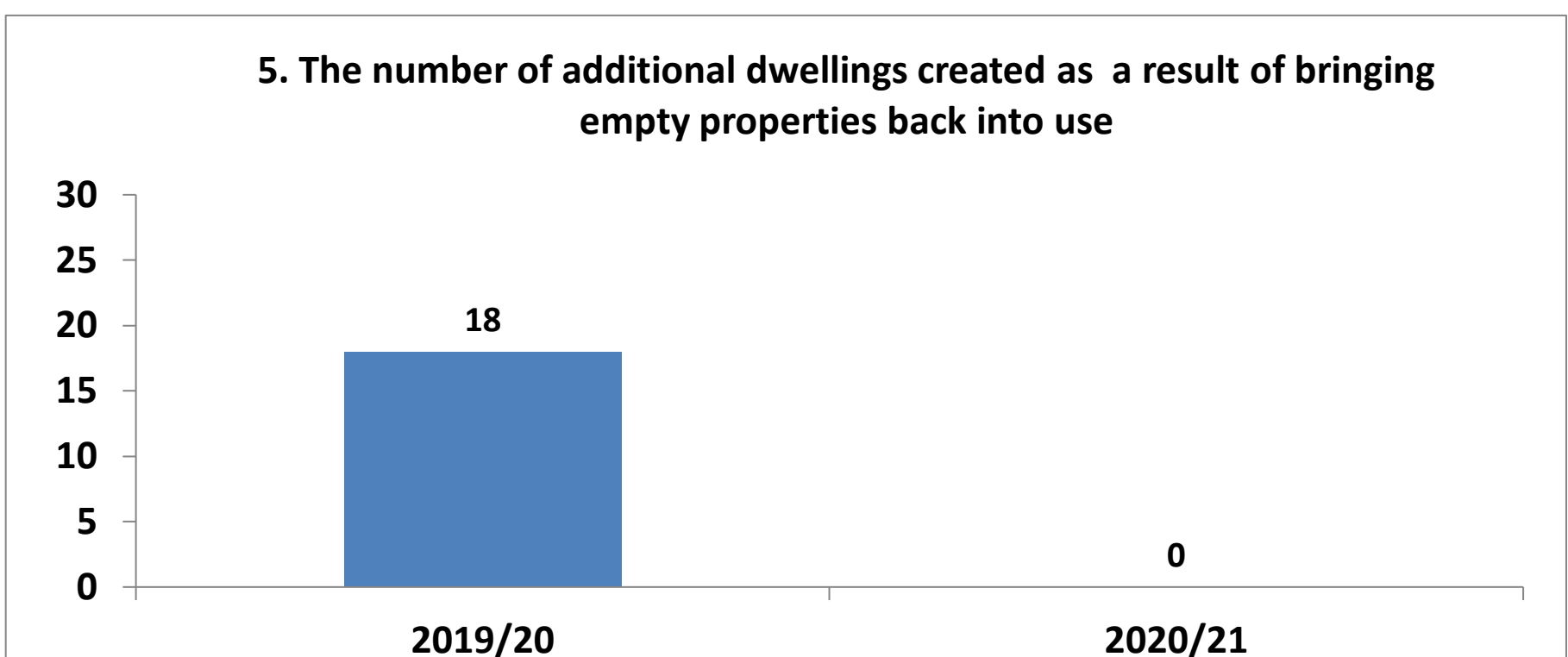


WBO 3 (Outcome 3)



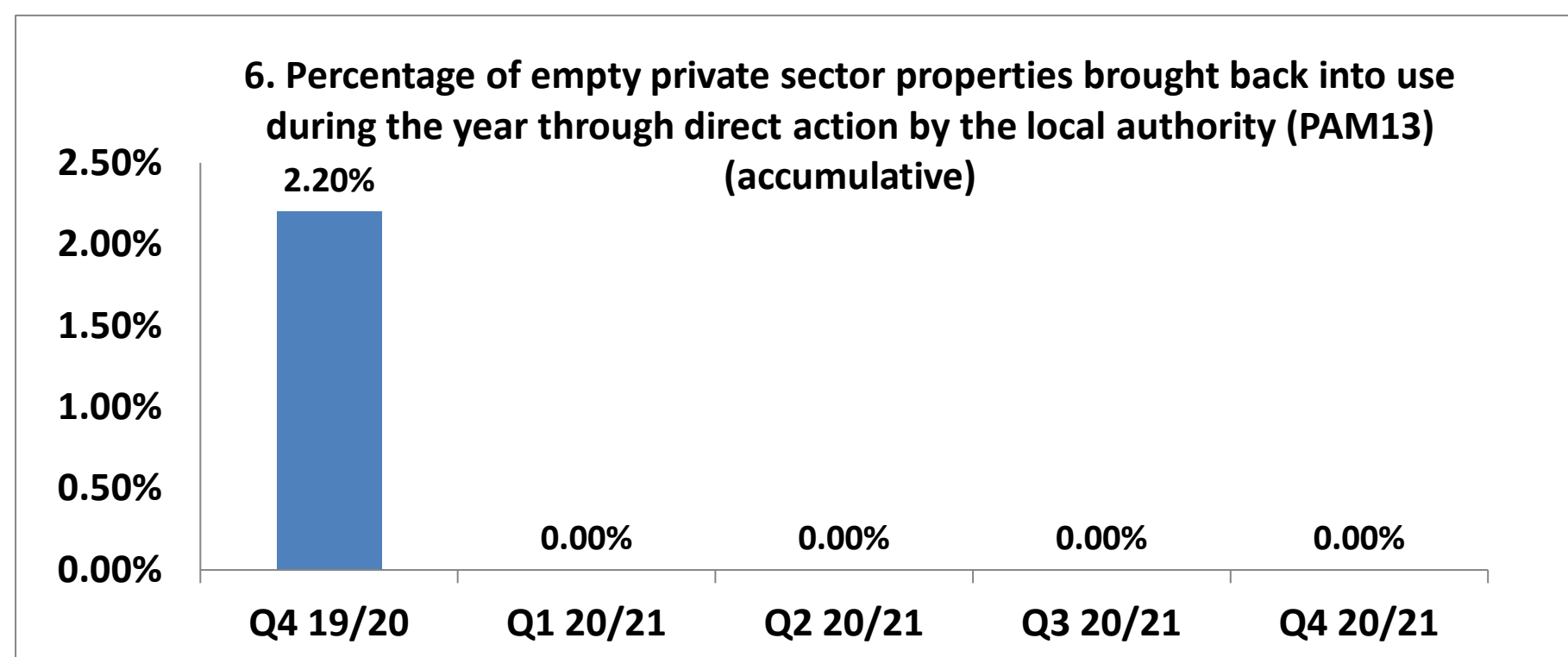
WBO 3 (Outcome 3)

4. Increase the supply of housing by supporting opportunities to bring long-term, empty homes back into use



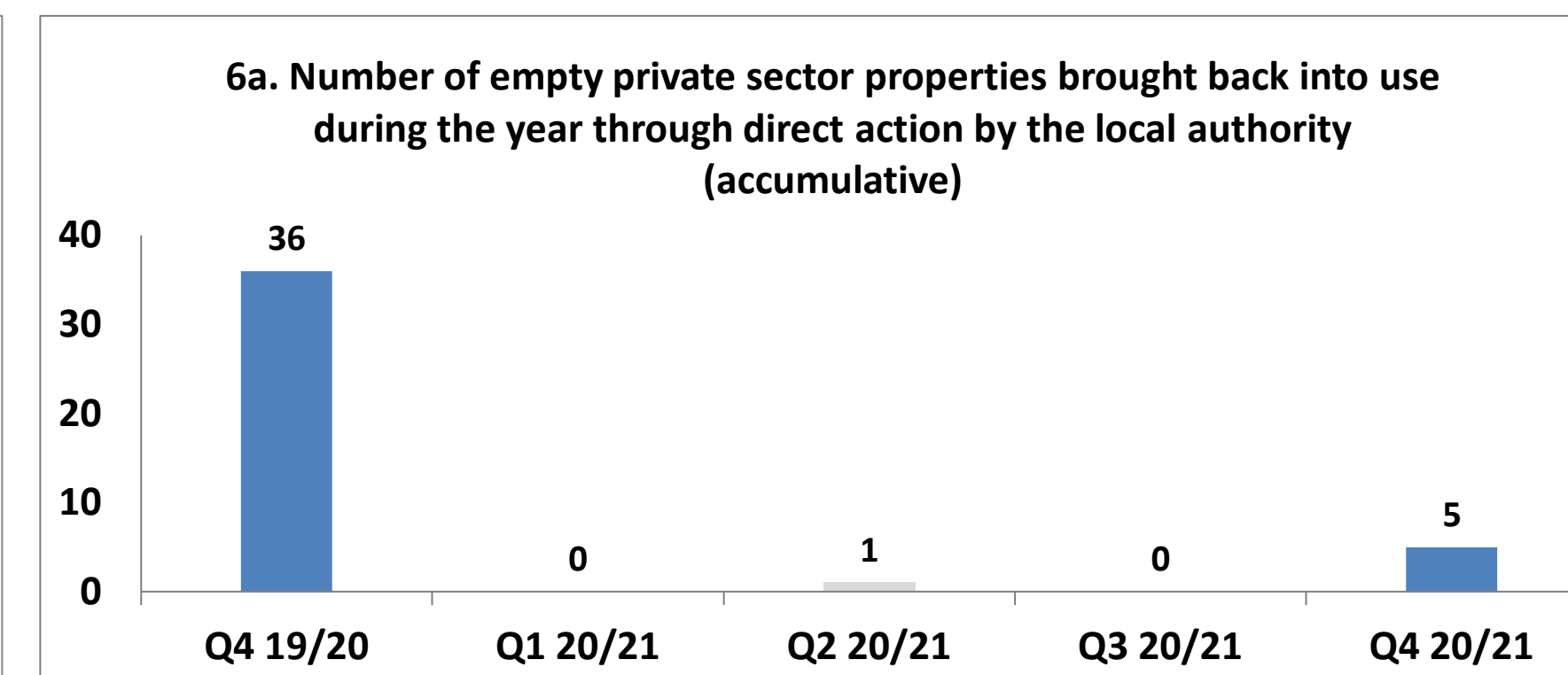
This measure is a part of the PAM set for contextual information only and is not used for comparison across Wales. The 2019/20 figure has been updated as of July 5th 2021

PAM/045



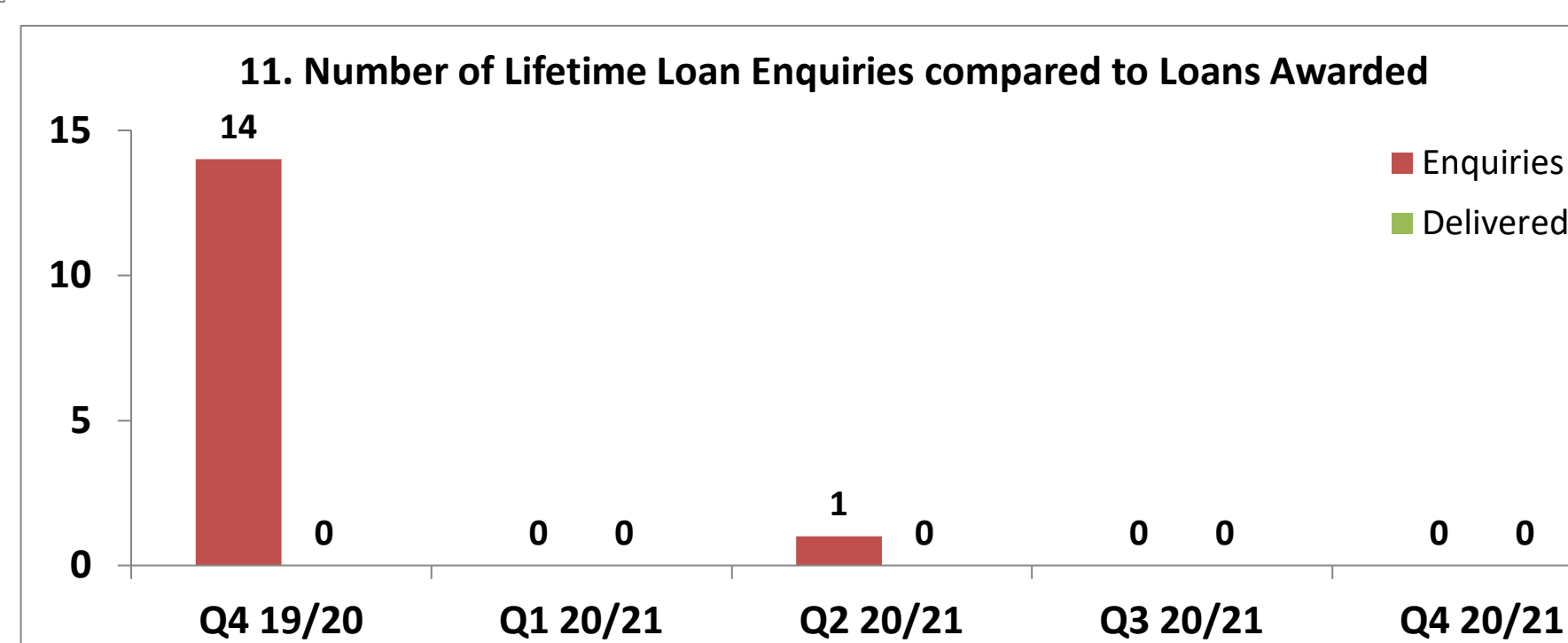
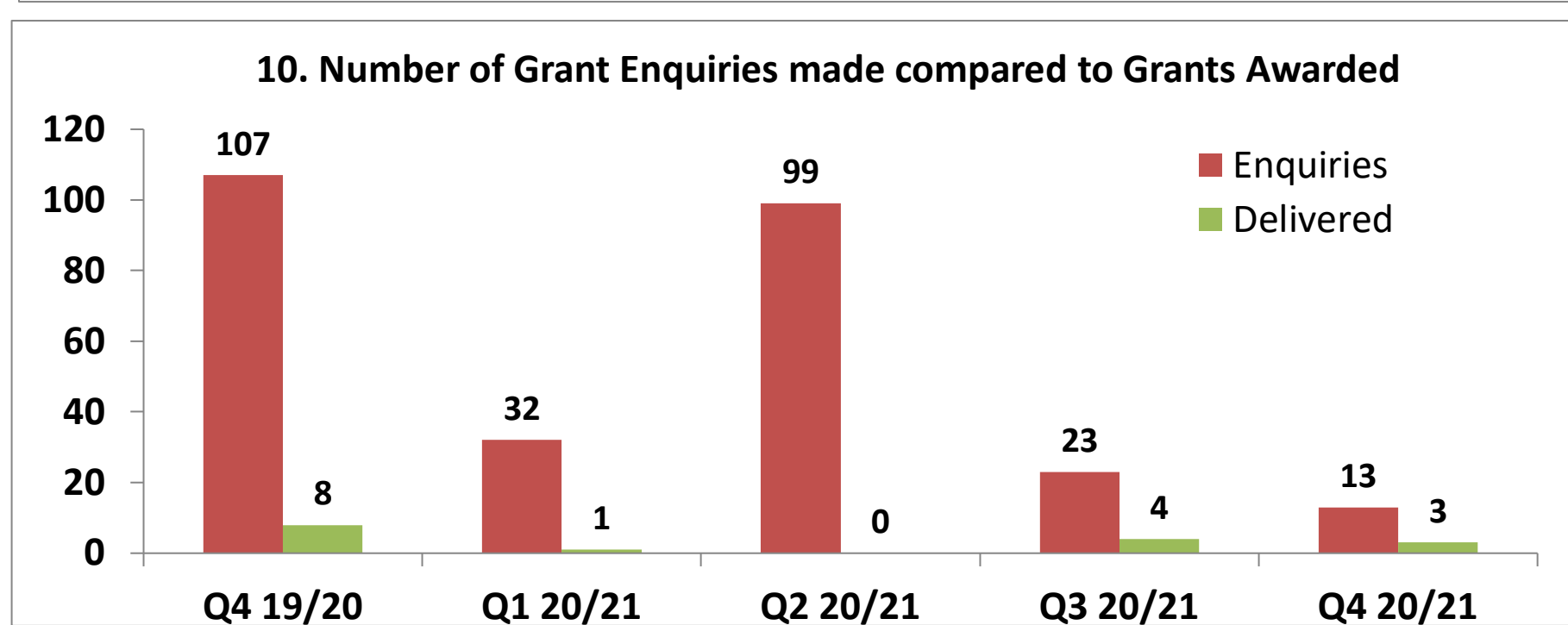
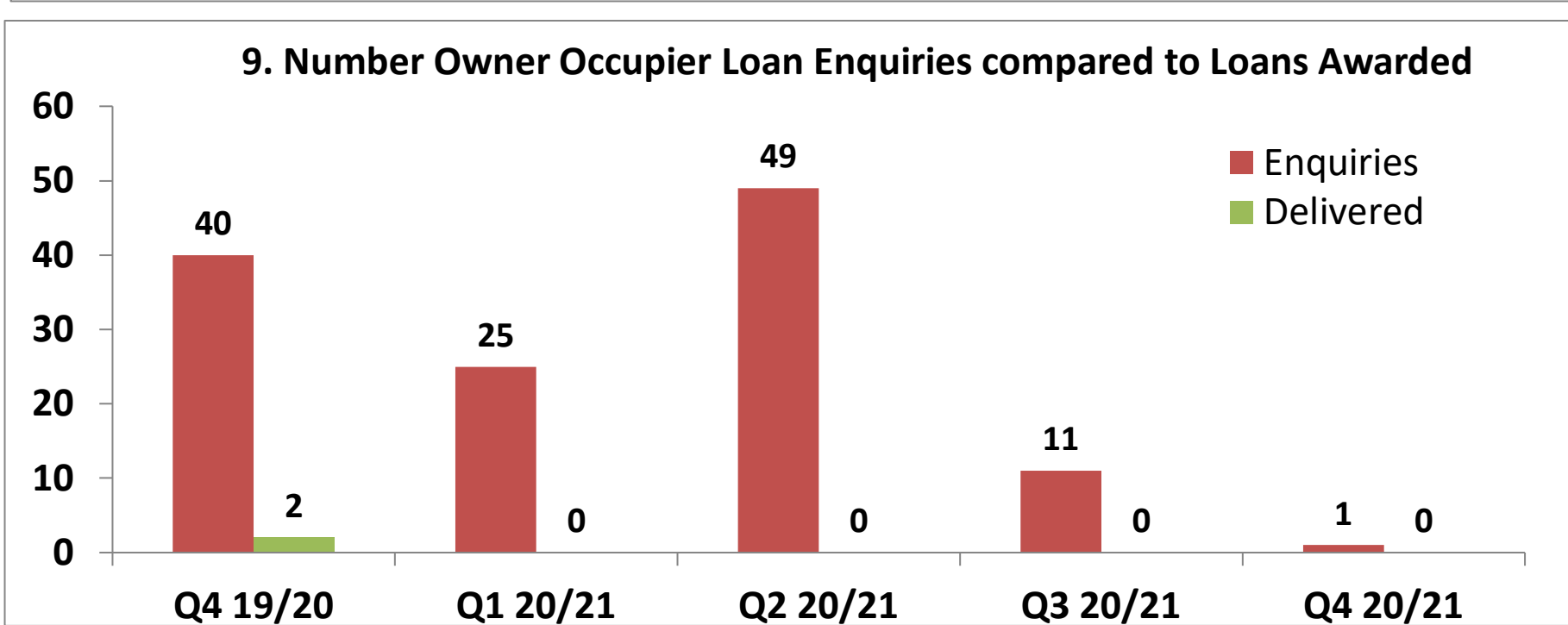
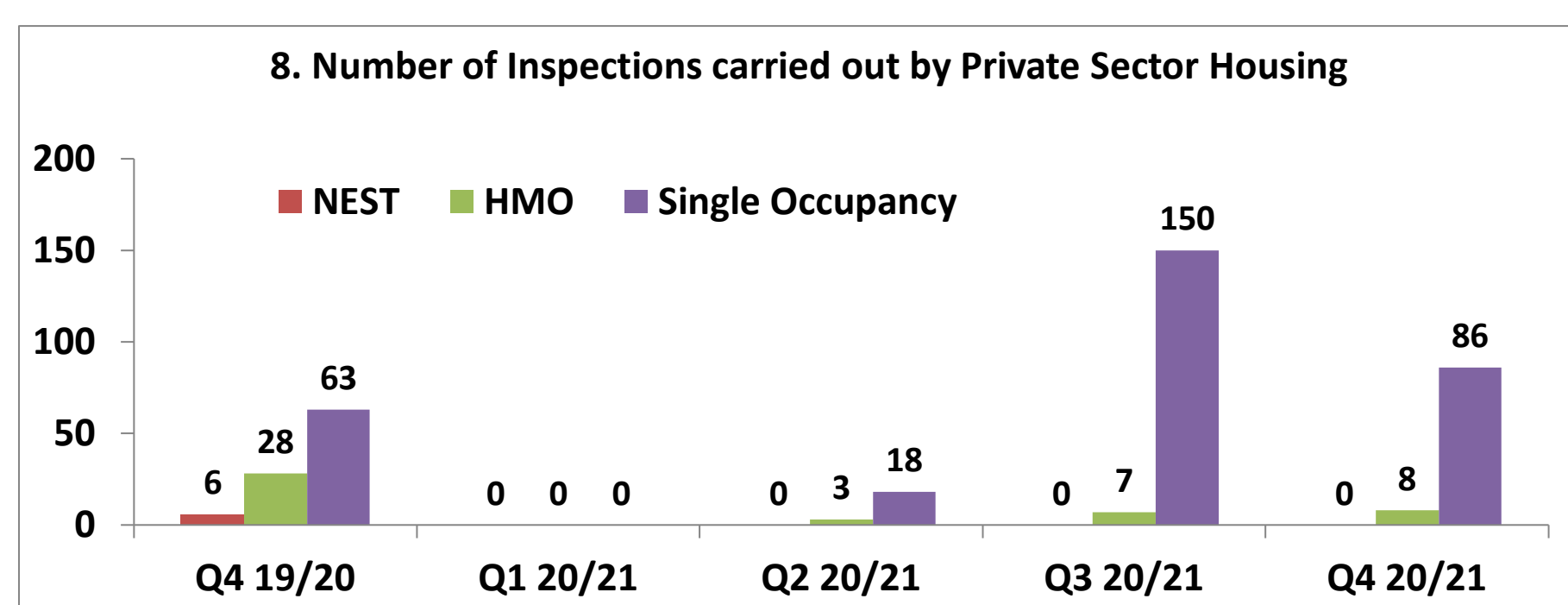
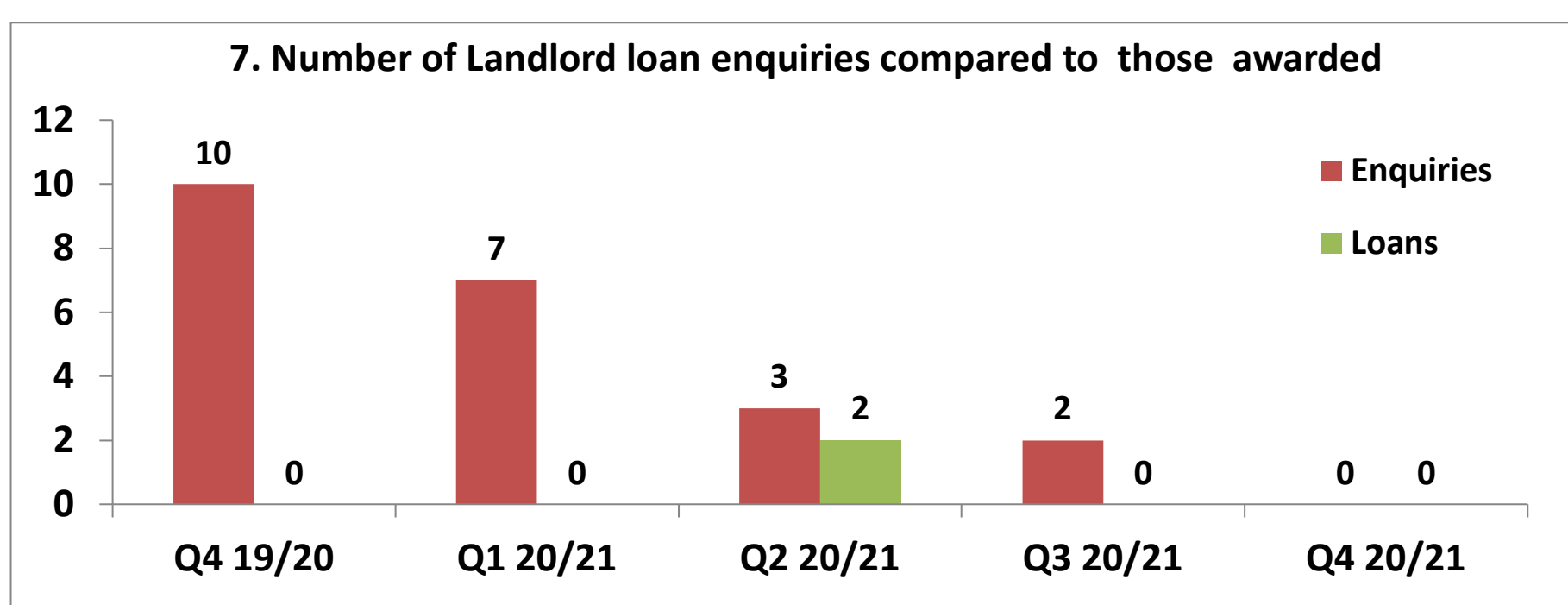
WBO 3 (Outcome 4)

PAM/013



The total number of empty private sector properties in the LA, which were empty for more than 6 months 1,624 in 2019/20 and 1,441 in 2020/21

5. Tackle the determinants of poor health and well-being by improving housing conditions in the private sector



WBO 3 (Outcome5)

WBO 3 (Outcome 5)

WBO 3 (Outcome 5)

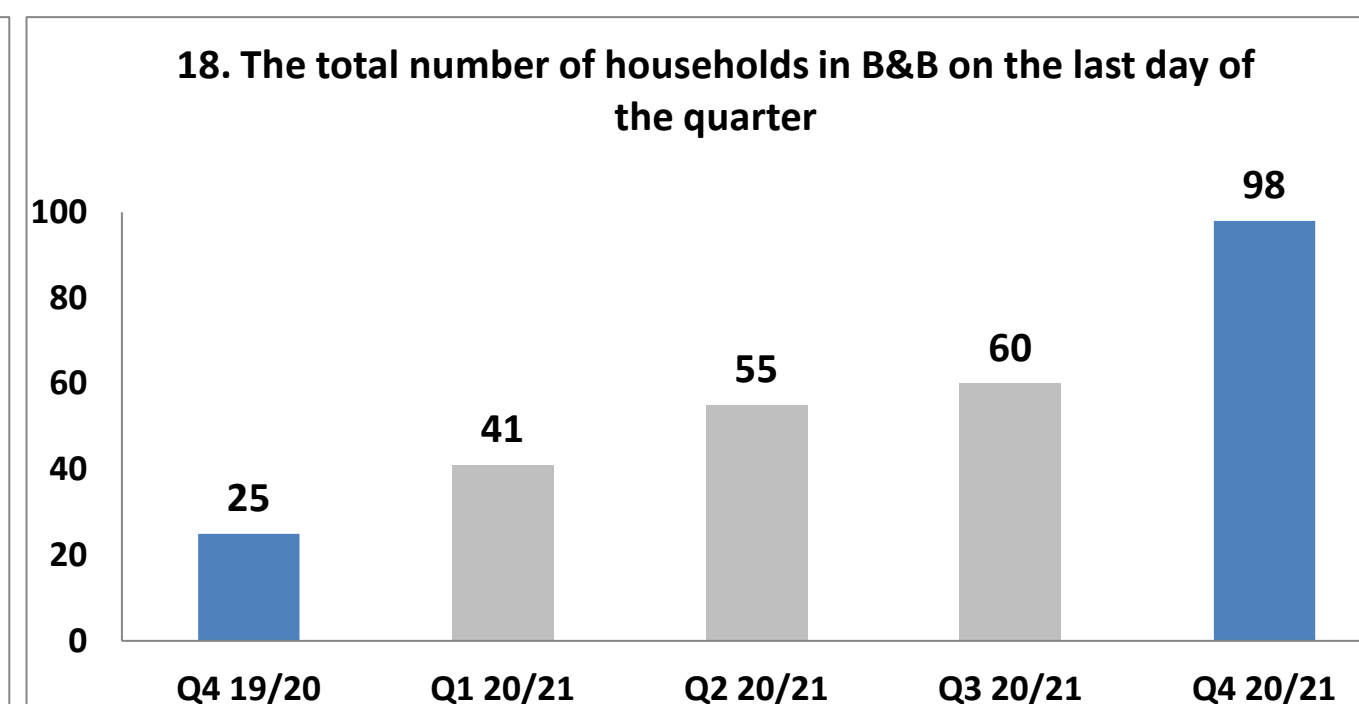
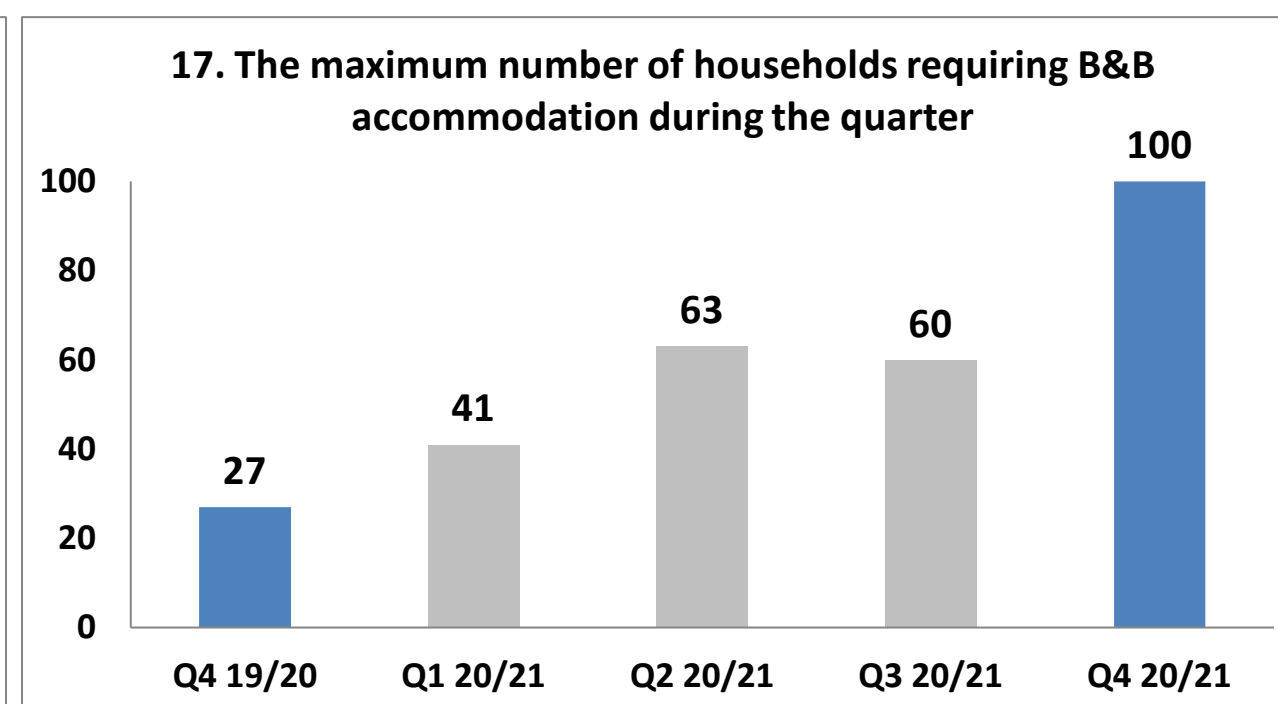
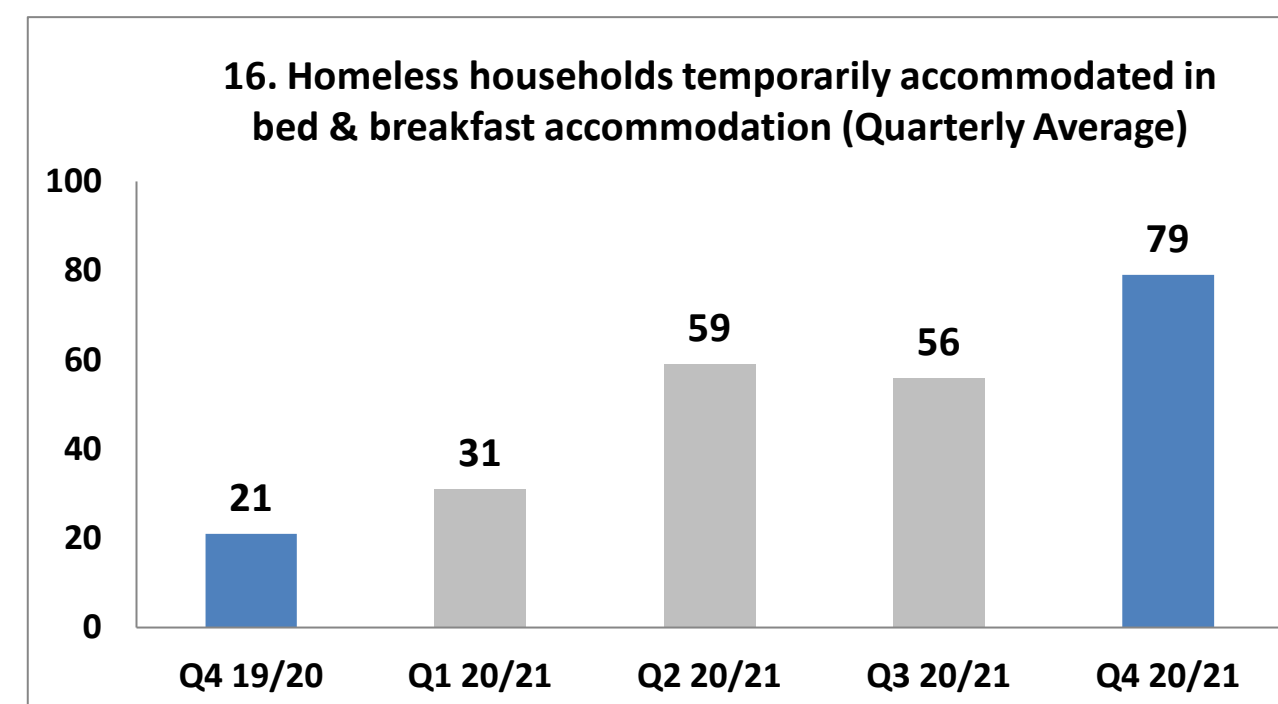
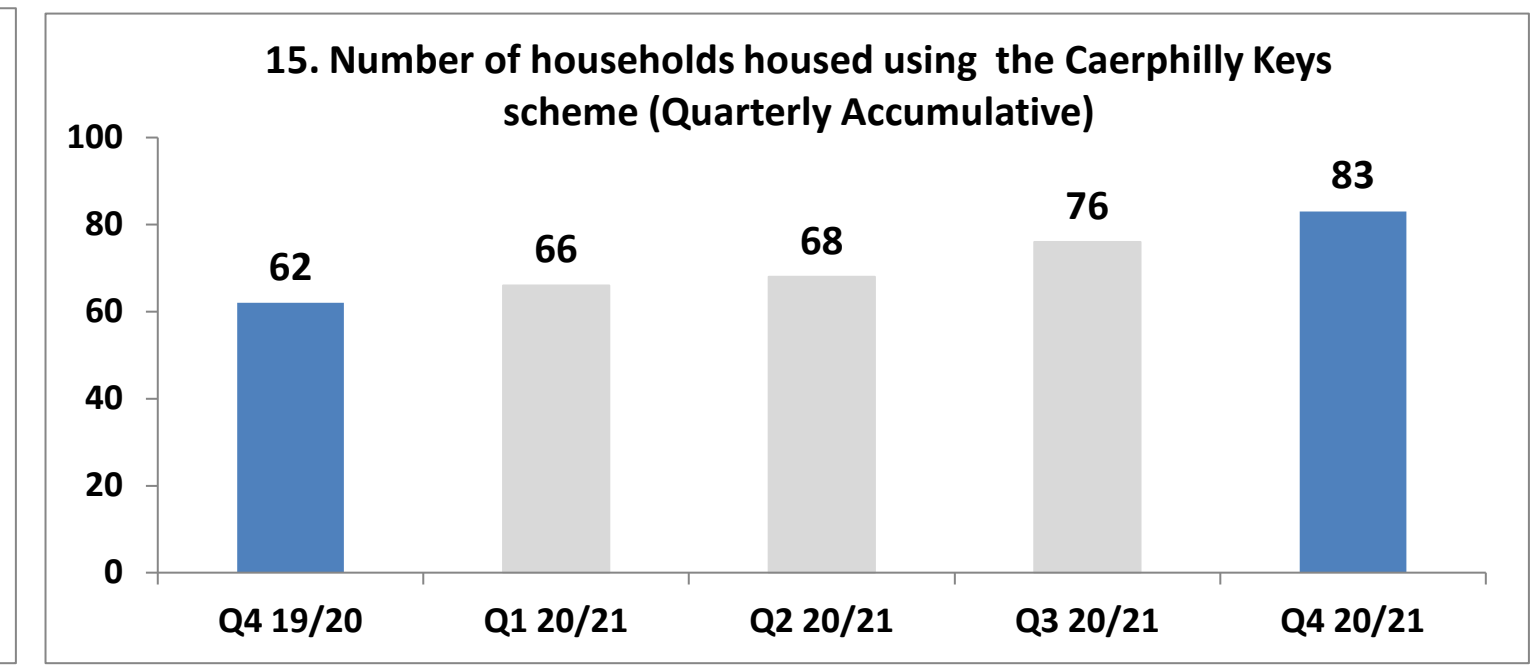
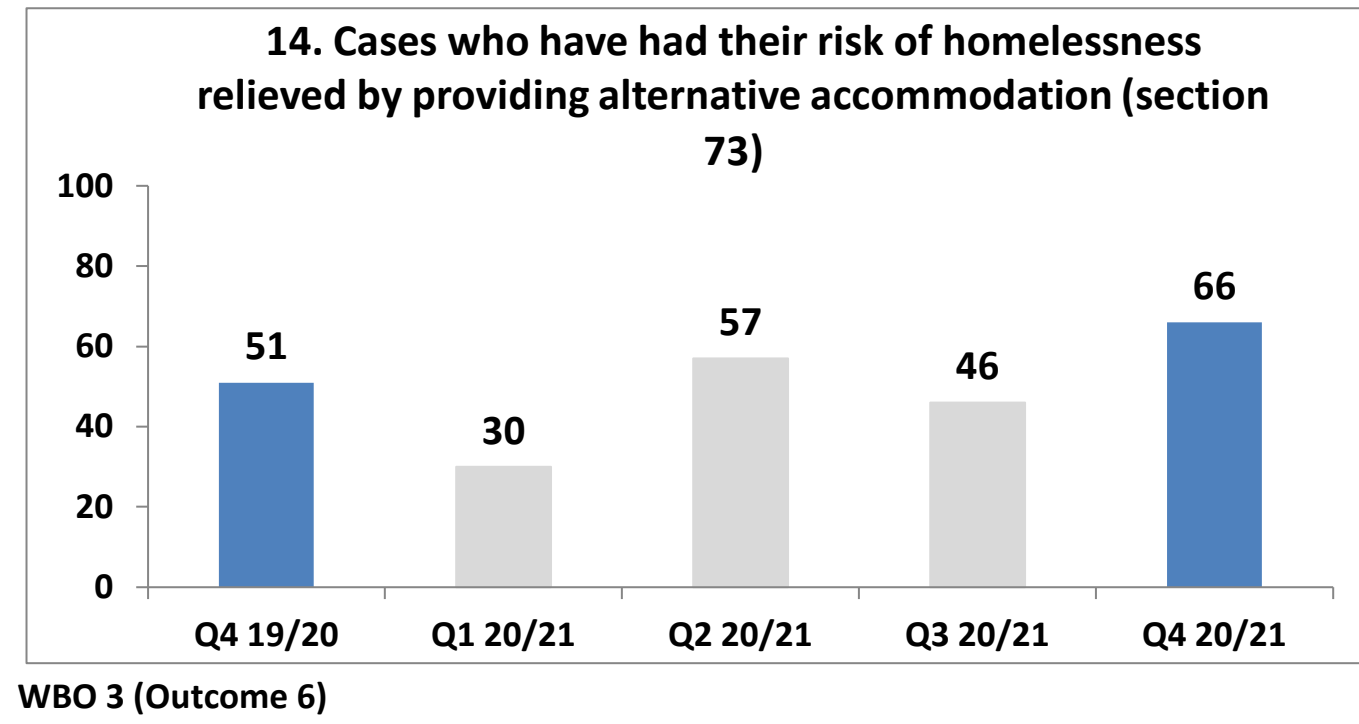
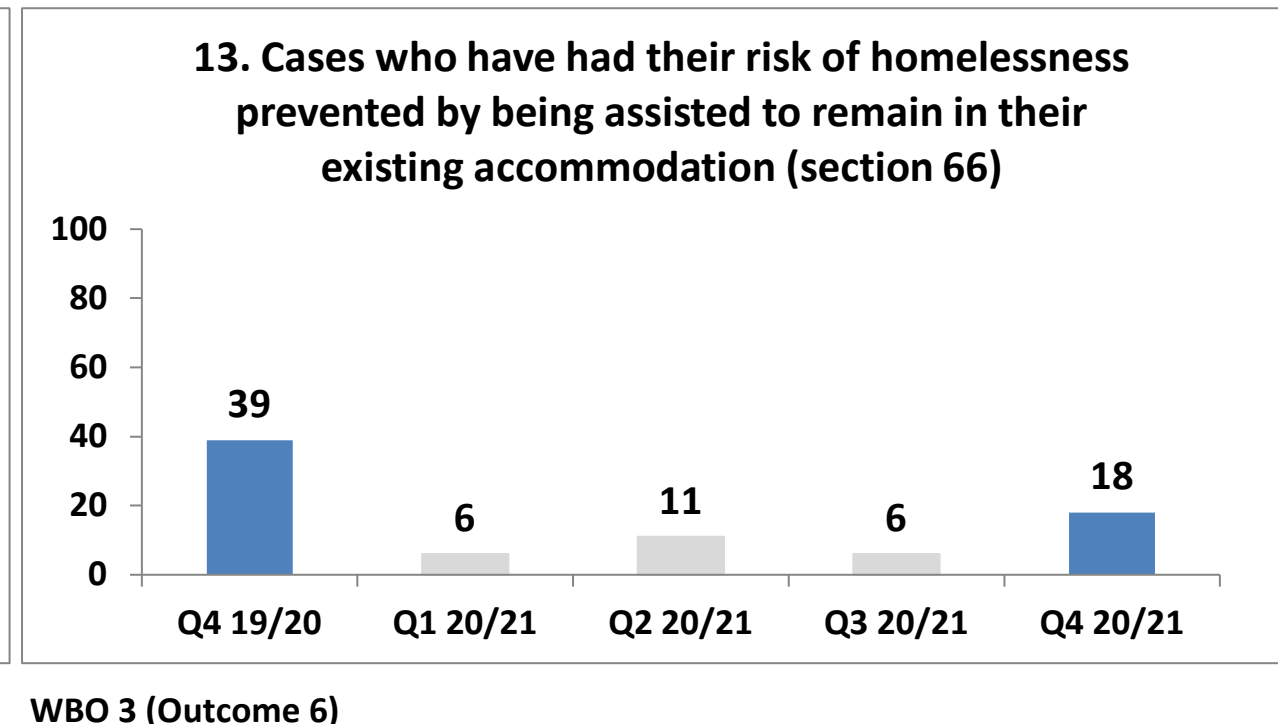
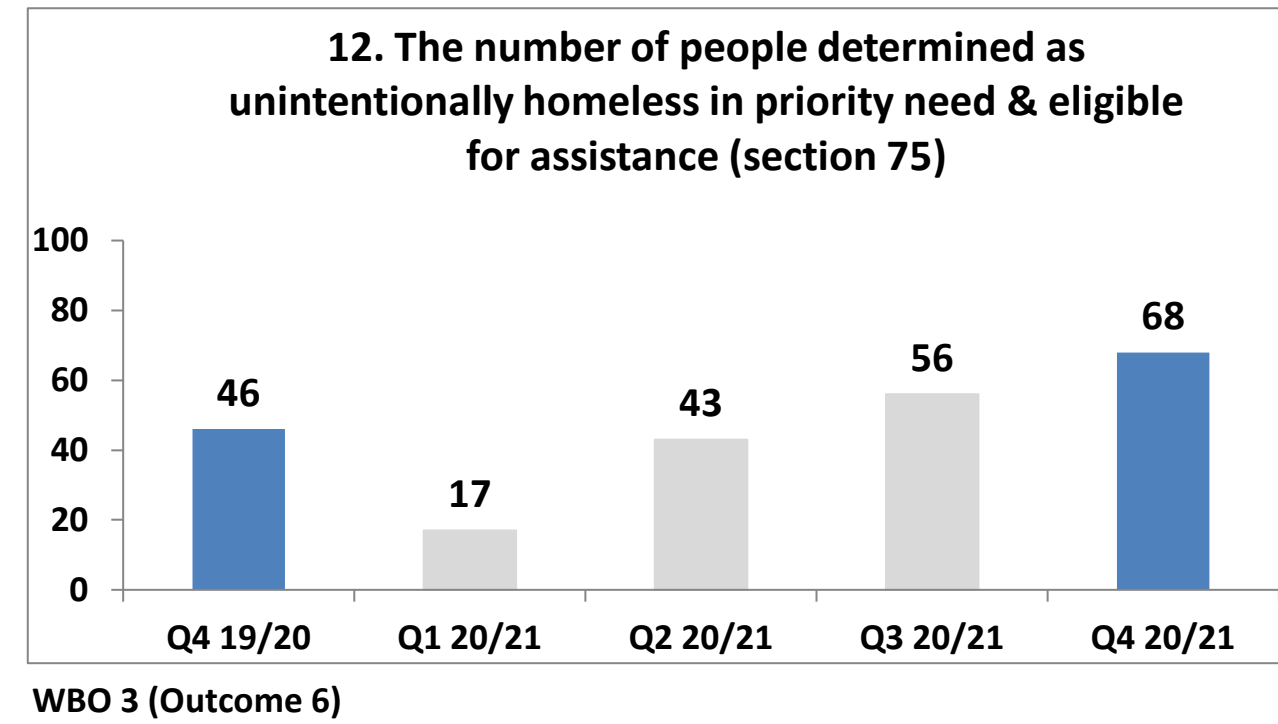
What is the performance telling us?

Performance has been significantly impacted during this financial year as a consequence of the Covid pandemic, with staff being unable to undertake a number of core activities in order to comply with Welsh Government guidelines. A number of staff were also redeployed during the year to assist with corporate duties and support the most vulnerable within our communities. The increase in the number of inspections in the second half of the year reflects the changes to WG guidance and the inspection of vacant properties

Measures:

- 1, 2 & 3) Routine works of adaptation were not considered to be essential, in accordance with WG Covid guidance and due to risks associated with vulnerable client group. The small number of essential schemes able to be completed during periods of lockdown were largely to facilitate hospital discharge and required extensive works, including extensions. Also, the PI is very limited and not sufficient to enable a full evaluation of performance. Work to replace the PI is ongoing with WG and in the meantime remains for reporting purposes. Adaptations vary in size and scale and a single application may include multiple adaptations and contracts. We offer a comprehensive agency service to support applicants with adaptations delivered. This takes time but ensures those who would be unable to manage the process themselves get the adaptations they need. Members have recently supported our approach to delivering DFGs which focusses on outcomes for the customer rather than speed of delivery and average delivery times. Whilst there has been a return to processing routine applications the pandemic has significantly impacted on contractor availability, costs and operational practices on site. There have also been delays linked to clients shielding and material shortages. The impact of the lockdown will continue to be evidenced in future quarters as resulting backlogs are addressed.
- 5) Empty homes work was initially considered non-essential and is often proactive in nature, therefore, no work was permitted during the first few months of lockdown. Work to create additional new homes by the return to use of empty properties often relates to conversion grants which had ceased due to them being deemed not essential so no such grants were completed during the financial year.
- 6) 5 properties that met the PI definition were returned to use in Q2. Additional long term empty properties were returned to use but were not listed on the original council tax data or were returned to use as socially rented properties rather than private so have been excluded from the figures. 1441 properties were recorded as empty for 20/21. Most Empty Homes work was suspended due to WG guidance. Nationally empties work on grants via Valleys Taskforce recommenced 7/2020 but Cabinet Approval not obtained until mid-September for CCBC to participate in Phase 2. No Valleys Task Force grants were able to be completed within the time period to the end of the financial year however 127 enquiries were received with 83 proceeding to application stage. Should these applications proceed to approval and completion the return to use of these properties will be reflected in 21/22 returns.
- 7) The processing of Landlord loans was suspended during Lockdown and the Loans system closed to new applications in October 2020 and remained closed to the end of the year. 2 Landlord loans and 8 Home Repair Grants have been delivered. Loans and Home Repair Grants were not considered essential in the first lockdown and were not progressed until the guidance changed in August allowing staff to enter homes for routine work. The system re-opened in September but limited progress made before the second lockdown due to timescale, requirements of WG - contractor issues - supply issues - staff returning from informal redeployment, social distancing restrictions.
- 8) Q1 and Q2 - Impact of Covid lockdown and WG guidelines. The increase in the number of inspections in the second half of the year reflects the changes to WG guidance and the inspection of vacant properties.
- 9, 10 & 11) The processing of owner occupier grants and loans was suspended during Lockdown periods. The grant and Loans systems closed to new applications in October 2020 and remained closed to the end of the year. The financial assessment element of loans have not progressed as the service provided by a Credit Union has been suspended due to the pandemic.

6. Prevent Homelessness and tackle rough sleeping

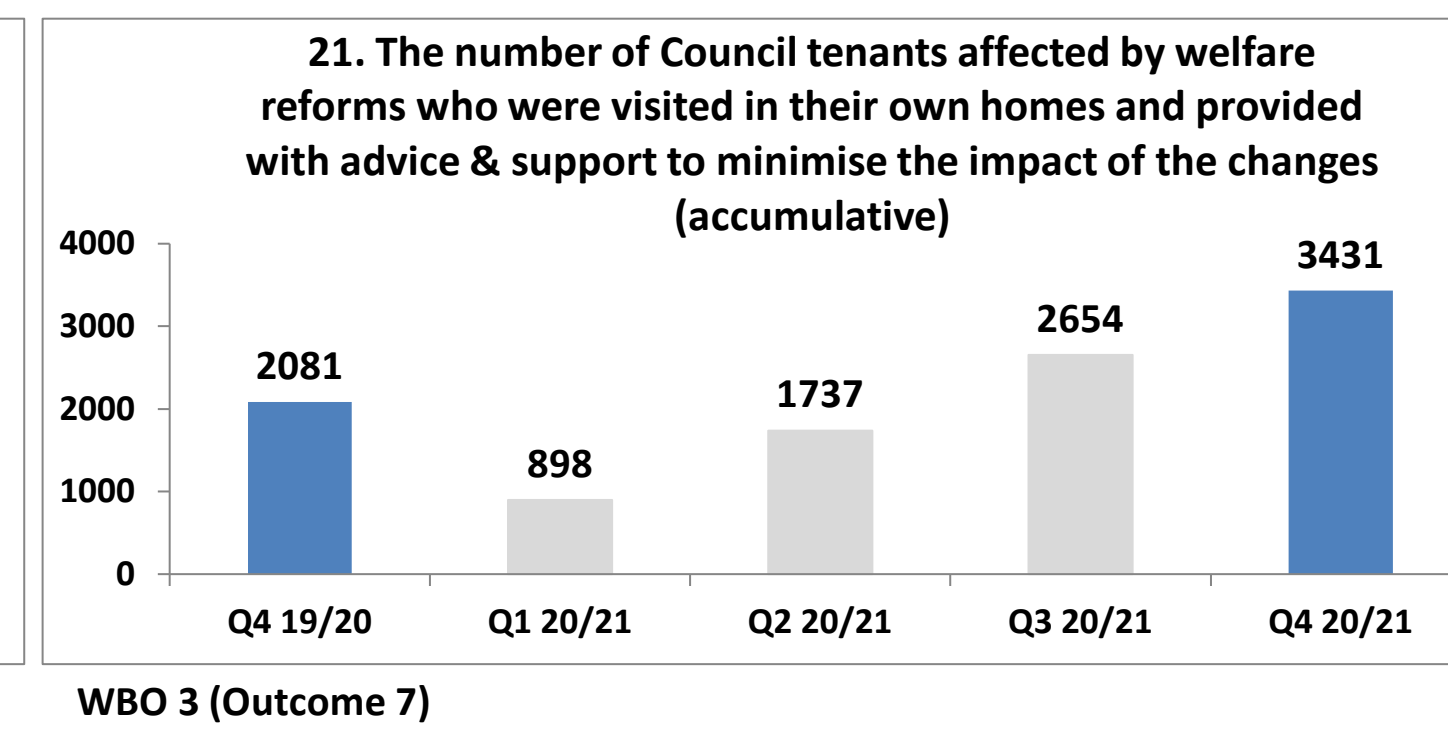
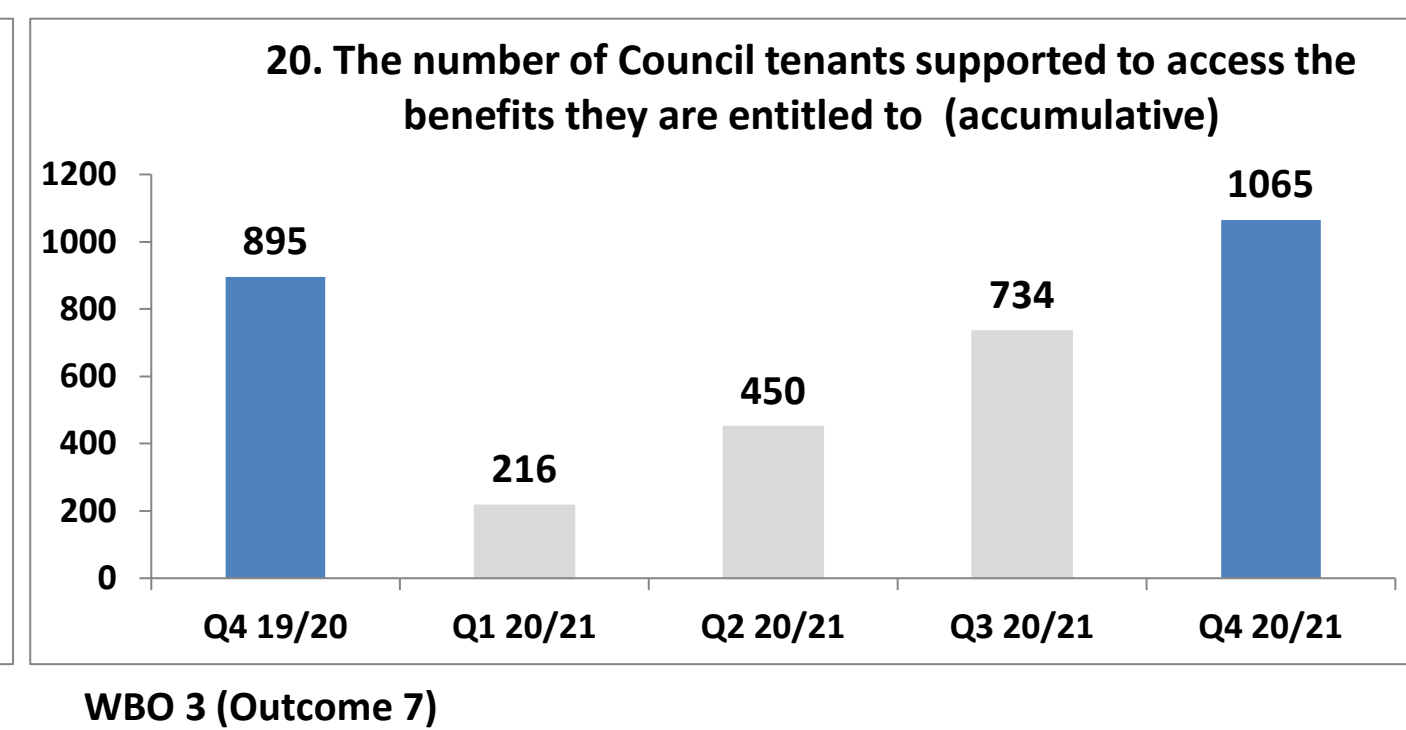
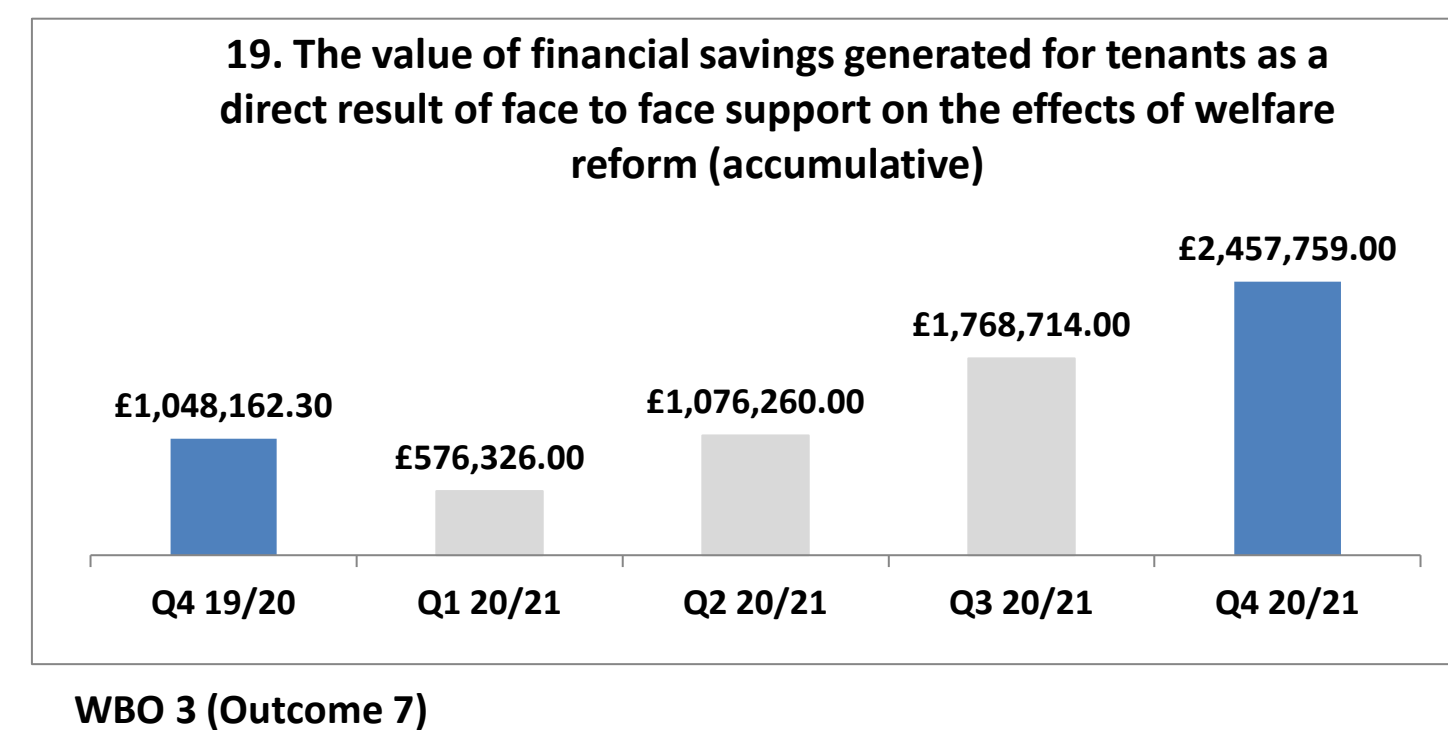


These two measures show the movement of people in and out of B&B over the quarter

15. Caerphilly Keys Households housed by type to date

Couple with dependant Child(ren)	10
Single parent household with dependant children - Male applicants	1
Single parent household with dependant children - Female applicants	15
Single person household - Male applicant	25
Single person household - Female applicant	15
All other household groups	10
No. Homeless or A&P case	7
Total	83

7. Sustaining tenancies by providing a range of housing related services.



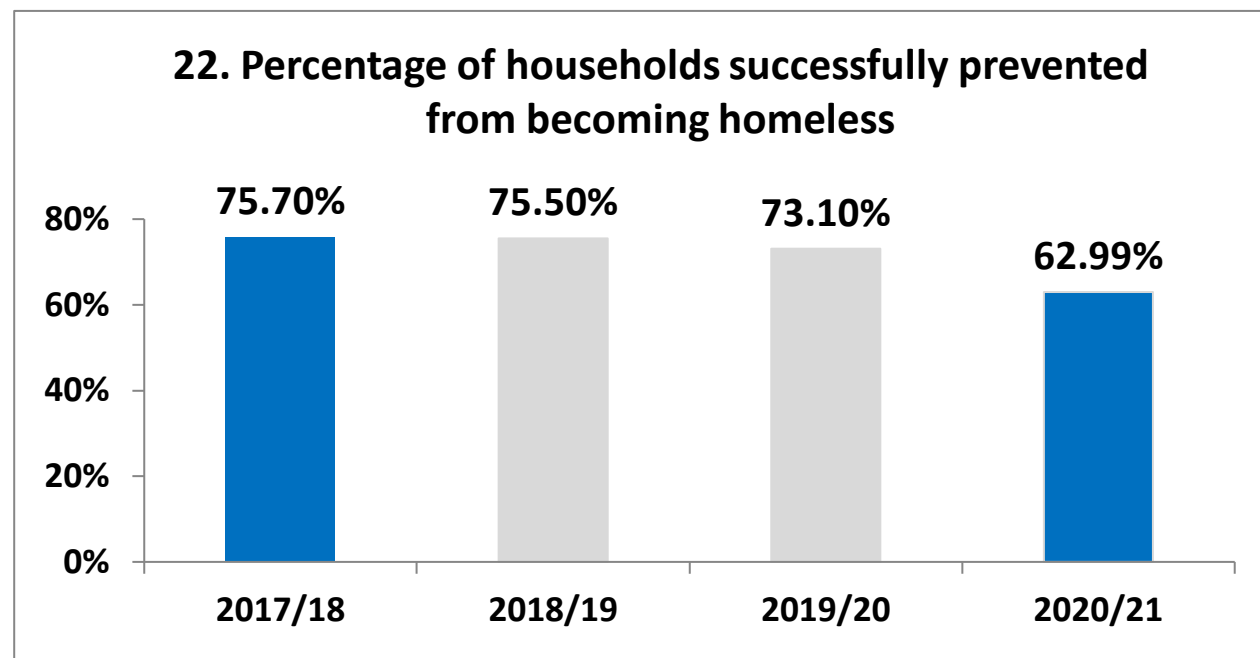
please note due to Covid-19 restrictions this now relates to remote support engagements

What is the performance telling us?

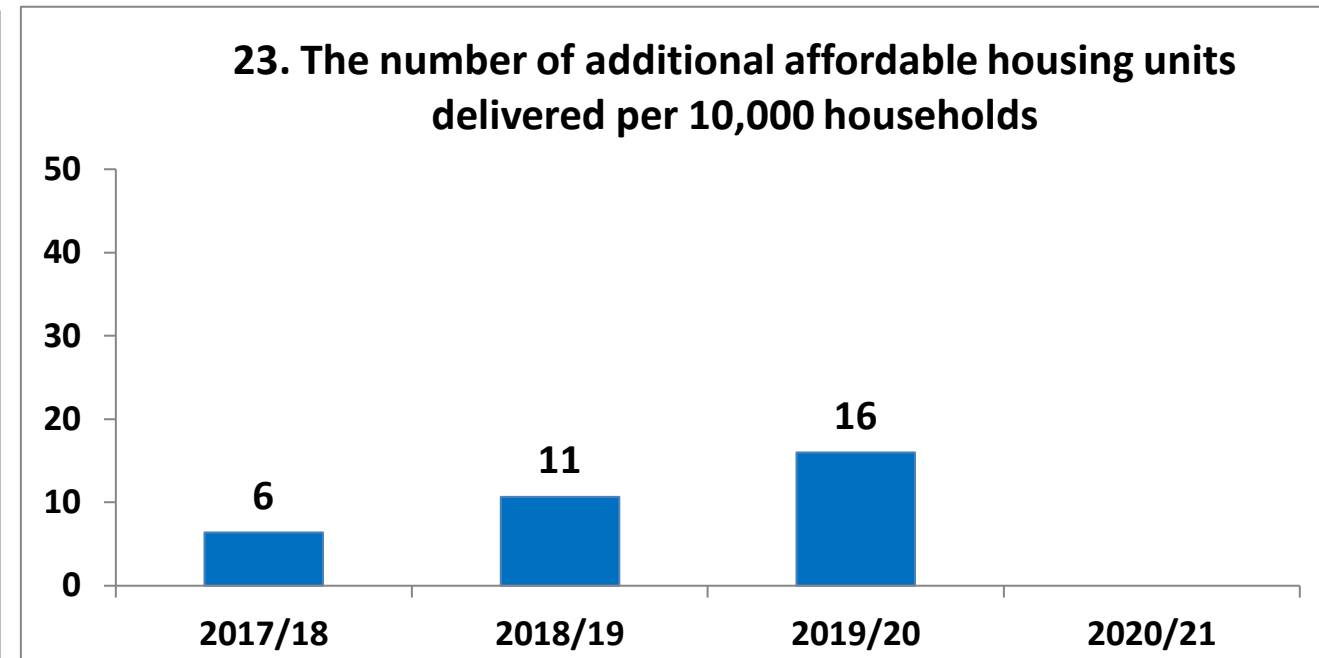
As a consequence of Covid the service has seen a significant increase in demand for our homelessness services. This has seen higher numbers of presentations and placements in emergency temporary accommodation. There has also been a significant increase in the use of hotels and Bed & Breakfast accommodation due to the pandemic and in order to comply with associated new guidance issued by WG although alternative options for the provision of emergency temporary accommodation are continually being sought with some success. The team has performed extremely well in addressing rough sleeping within the county borough and supporting this vulnerable client group. However, moving forward we need to ensure that the Housing Solutions Service is able to respond proactively and meet the housing and support needs of those whom we have a duty to assist.

A second Welfare Benefits advisor was appointed in September 2019 who, after a period of training and transitions, commenced supporting tenants in November 2019. Due to the Department of Work and Pensions delays in administering benefit claims the results of this additional support investment was not realised until the first quarter this financial year but the additional appointment has had a huge positive impact for our tenants. The provision of remote advice by the team since the March lockdown has proven to be a huge success as they are able to support more tenants. An additional benefit has been the move by the Department of Work & Pensions to telephone hearings for tribunal cases, enabling conference calls to be held, and a large amount of backdates of benefits have been achieved for our tenants at these hearings. The additional financial savings are split between additional welfare benefits and water savings through reduced tariffs. Although the total numbers of tenants supported to access the savings they are entitled to has remained static the numbers supported to access the welfare benefits elements have more than doubled hence the realisation of higher financial benefits for our tenants this year. Since lockdown no home visits have been carried out and telephone support has been provided to tenants. We have been able to support a larger number of tenants remotely. however we need to ensure the service we deliver is accessible and valued by our tenants. We have worked closely with the Tenant and Community Involvement Team to develop a questionnaire survey that they will undertake with a sample of our support engagements. We can then use the results to ensure our remote service is tailored and developed taking tenants views into account

8. Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)

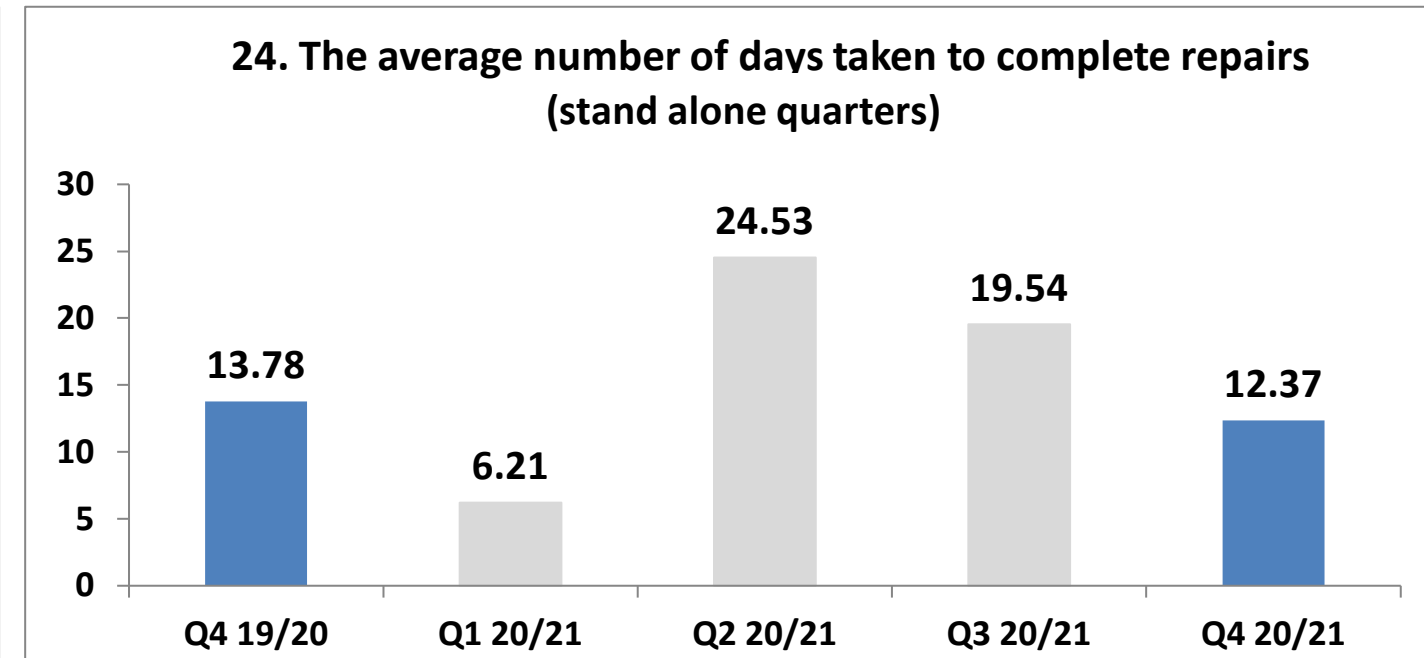


PAM/012



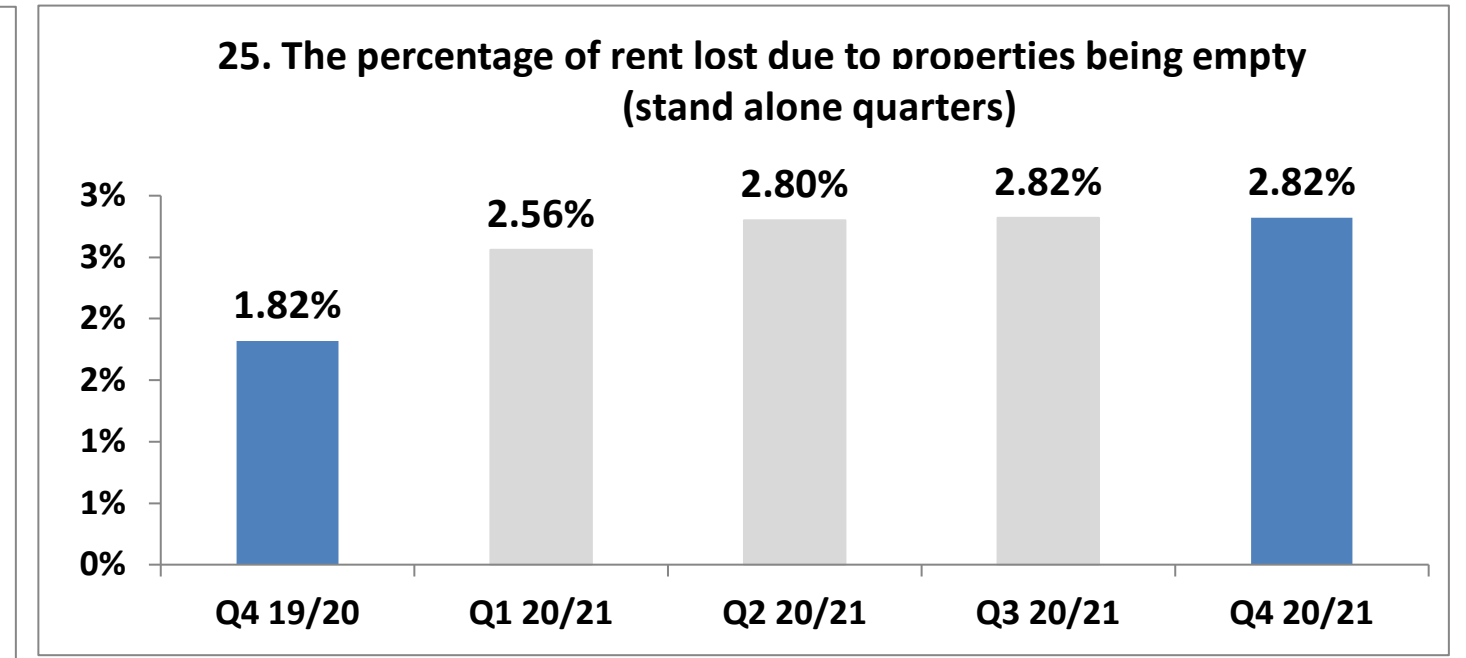
2019/20 figure is draft and subject to change
2020/21 figure is currently unavailable

PAM/036



2020/21 Annual figure is 17.02 days

PAM/037



2020/21 Annual figure is 2.82%

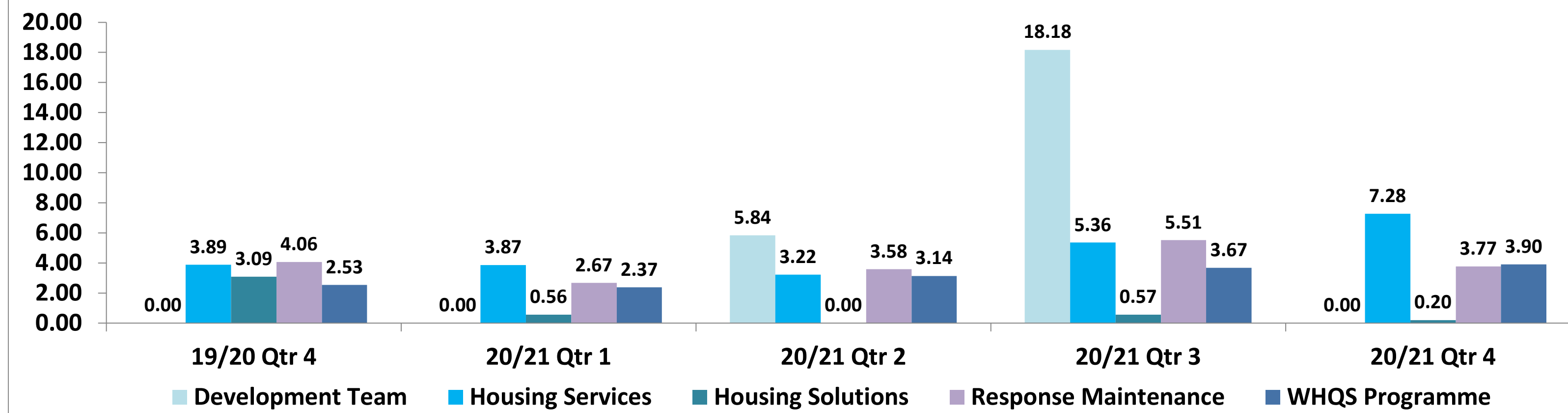
PAM/039

What is the performance telling us?

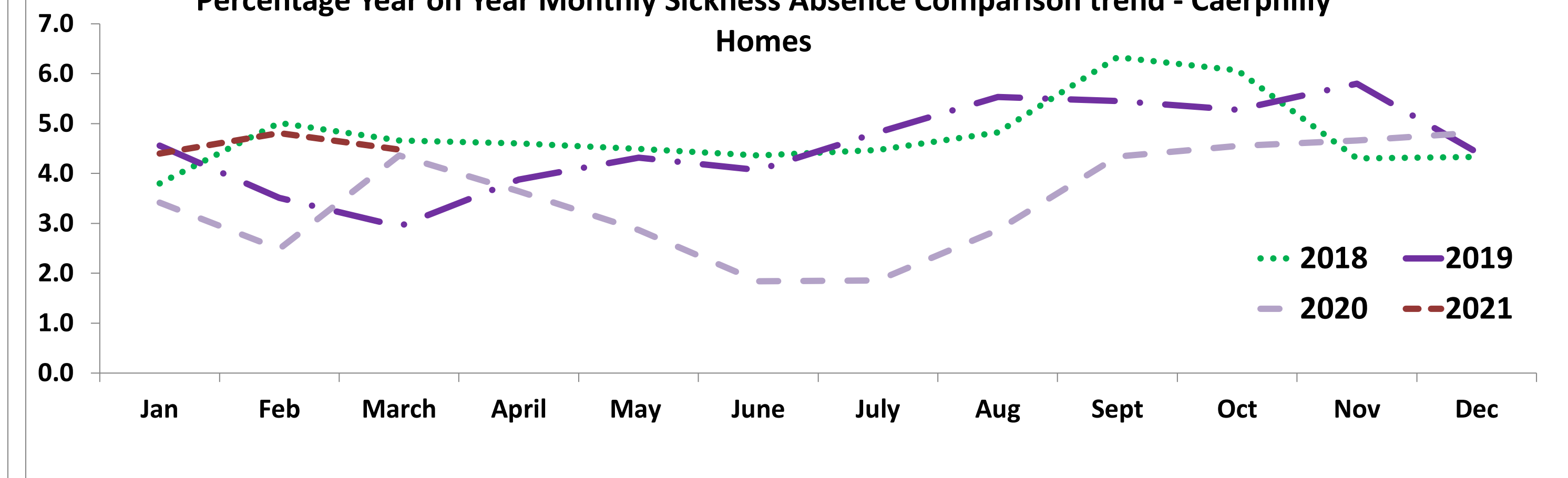
The Public Accountability Measures highlight the detrimental impact the Covid pandemic and lockdown restrictions have had on some of our key indicators. However the focus has been on the delivery of essential services in the main during this time, aimed at supporting our most vulnerable clients e.g. homelessness, elderly, financial support, emergency repairs, adaptations, works to void properties, and allocations. The number and type of repairs undertaken to our housing stock during 2020/21 has been significantly impacted by pandemic restrictions, being limited to external and emergency repairs during periods of lockdown. Non essential internal repairs have been held in abeyance to be addressed when lockdowns ease, which may impact on future performance.



Percentage Quarterly Sickness - Caerphilly Homes



Percentage Year on Year Monthly Sickness Absence Comparison trend - Caerphilly Homes



Q3 Monthly Breakdown	October 2020			November 2020			December 2020		
% Sickness Absence	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall
Development Team	0	33.33	33.33	0	19.05	19.05	0	0	0
Housing Services	0.97	3.32	4.29	1.41	4.62	6.03	1.16	4.61	5.78
Housing Solutions	0.71	0	0.71	0	0	0	0.96	0	0.96
Response Maintenance	2.23	3.20	5.43	1.05	3.39	4.44	3.71	3.03	6.75
WHQS Programme	1.71	2.43	4.15	2.03	2.33	4.35	0.78	1.80	2.58

Housing Workforce Information	Qtr. 4	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr. 4
Voluntary Leavers*	4	6	4	7	6
Other Leavers**	0	1	2	0	0
Total Leavers	4	7	6	7	6
New Entrants	2	0	0	0	5
Headcount	502	495	488	479	480
55 and Over	143	139	137	139	142
% of headcount	28.48%	28.08%	28.07%	29.02%	29.58%
Agency	20	20	18	16	14

***Voluntary Reasons:** Flexible retirement, retirement, settlement agreement, voluntary resignation & severance, Early retirement, Personal reasons, Transfer, VER release of Pension Benefits, Early retirement by mutual consent on grounds of business.

****Other Leaver Reasons:** Death in service, Dismissal, Dismissal on ill health grounds, End of fixed term contract, End of relief employment, Gross Misconduct, Sickness Absence Management, Frustrated Contract, Compulsory Redundancy, failed Probation.

Q4 Monthly Breakdown	January 2021			February 2021			March 2021		
% Sickness Absence	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall
Development Team	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Services	3.10	4.26	7.36	2.38	5.03	7.41	0.85	5.86	6.71
Housing Solutions	0.45	0	0.45	0	0	0	0.14	0	0.14
Response Maintenance	0.87	3.00	3.86	1.07	2.80	3.86	1.69	1.88	3.58
WHQS Programme	0.35	2.49	2.84	1.98	2.48	4.46	0.76	3.60	4.36

What is our Workforce Information telling us?

There has been an increase in voluntary and agency leavers and this has been managed as there was a requirement to reduce the workforce within our WHQS team as the programme is nearing it's conclusion. Despite operating in a pandemic situation, sickness absence has actually reduced in the first 2 quarters. There was however a significant increase in absence for the Development team in Quarters 2 and 3 which is a result of one member of staff within a small team. The increase in Housing Services in Quarter 4 is due to a number of long term absences. There have also been a number of absences associated with the pandemic.

The increase in new starters in Qu. 4 includes the appointment of a new Housing Solutions Manager and the appointment of staff to support both tenancy sustainment and homelessness.

**What is our financial information telling us?**

The HRA for 2020/21 is £52m and variances are typical for a budget this size especially with over 500 staff employed within the service. The HRA remains viable although it has been significantly impacted due to Covid-19. Unforeseen costs to accommodate working under Covid-19 conditions were £2m consisting of PPE equipment, IT set up for home working, increased rent allowances, voids and operatives lost time. Welsh Government have offered financial assistance to Local Authorities for Covid-19 expenditure but the HRA does not qualify for any assistance as a social landlord. Conversely, expenditure has reduced in major services such as WHQS and Housing Repairs Operations (HRO) due to the inability to enter tenants homes (although essential work remained) and this has resulted in an overall surplus to the HRA of £10m. The WHQS programme did not meet its target of June 2020 although it was on target to meet this deadline before Covid-19. Welsh Government (WG) have extended this deadline to December 2021, therefore the £10m surplus will be carried forward into 2021/22 to fund the completion of the WHQS programme. Current projections predict the programme will be completed by August 2021 (under current social distancing rules) with 136 properties outstanding for internal work, 69 properties for external work and 17 leaseholder properties.

General Fund Housing is utilising its Homelessness Prevention funding in an attempt to reduce homelessness, evictions and B&B accommodation as well as providing temporary accommodation as part of its statutory duty. During Covid-19 pressure was placed on this service to accommodate homeless persons and on average 70 people per month continue to be accommodated. This has been fully funded by the WG Covid-19 hardship fund. Typical B&B placements have however reduced due to the restriction of actioning any evictions during lockdown, but are expected to rise sharply when that restriction is lifted.

Private Housing agency fee income remains a concern within this budget but during this year WG offered financial assistance for eligible loss of income. Officers were unable to enter properties during lockdown to process applications and carry out work such as disabled adaptation and home repairs meaning fee income could not be generated. This service also assists with the WHQS programme. WG have paid all of the lost income claims this year which is 77% of the fee income budget. The remainder was collected by Private Housing for work it was able to carry out through the year which was in the main external works to support the WHQS programme.


Housing Services	Original Estimate	Revised Estimate	Actual Outturn	Actual Variance
2020/21 outturn	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21
	£000's	£000's	£000's	Under / (Over)
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)				
Building Maintenance (inc RCCO)	31,978,154	31,978,154	23,641,867	8,336,287
Public Sector Landlord	6,530,019	6,530,019	7,523,973	(993,954)
Capital Financing & BDP	9,328,031	9,328,031	7,194,291	2,133,740
Strategy	1,053,637	1,053,637	555,376	498,261
Central Recharges	2,793,870	2,793,870	2,573,614	220,256
Income (net of voids)	(51,683,711)	(51,683,711)	(51,507,061)	(176,650)
TOTAL HRA			(10,017,940)	11,188,544
HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME	29,678,935	29,678,935	20,384,949	9,293,986
GENERAL FUND HOUSING	1,342,897	1,342,897	1,032,879	310,018
PRIVATE HOUSING	302,895	302,895	250,455	52,440

What is our Assets information telling us?

Our housing stock is now in a good condition and nearing full compliance with WHQS with about 2% of our stock outstanding as at 1.4.21. Our financial position also ensures that the standard can be maintained going forward and there is scope to contribute towards meeting the WG decarbonisation agenda and the provision of new affordable housing, although this will need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis as projects come forward. The post asset management programme (PAM) has been agreed and was due to start mid year, however the delay on the WHQS Programme has set this back. On a positive note, to ensure continuity of the workforce during lockdown, some work that was earmarked for the PAM programme due to timing issues (e.g. buy backs) has now been completed. The PAMs programme will commence in 21/22 focussing on maintaining the external structures of our council homes.

As part of a review of office accommodation the Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office has been closed and new ways of delivering our services are being actively considered which could result in efficiencies being achieved through staff relocation and agile working. Plans are progressing to relocate staff from Cherry Tree House to Tiryberth and staff have been agile working successfully since March 2020.

There is a requirement for an increase in the provision of temporary or move on accommodation to assist with increasing levels of homelessness and this is actively being pursued.

Ref & Links	Topic (& Service)	Risks, Opportunities & Impacts	Mitigating Actions (What Actions can we take to address the risks or realise the opportunity)	Progress Update (Are the mitigating actions reducing the risk or realising the opportunity?)	Risk Level 2019-20 Q4	Risk Level 2020-21 Q1	Risk Level 2020-21 Q2	Risk Level 2020-21 Q3	Risk Level 2020-21 Q4	Does the risk affect the Well-being of our Communities?	Well-being Risk Level
	Brexit	The decision to leave the EU and the looming deadline to secure an exit deal has created considerable uncertainty. Moving forward it is difficult to determine what impact the exit from the EU will have in the medium to longer-term for Caerphilly CBC and our communities. However, in the short-term possible negative impacts from a no deal scenario include the potential for workforce supply shortages in some areas and the possibility of some disruption to the supply of goods and services.	Housing is participating in the Corporate Brexit Working Group and undertaking service specific analysis in preparation for the various Brexit scenarios.	There remains a great deal of uncertainty around the potential positive or negative impacts of the decision to leave the EU. The position is being monitored closely and CMT has established a Brexit Working Group to further consider and monitor the potential consequences of Brexit and the mitigating actions that will be required to assist in managing risks. In relation to Housing, we are working closely with our supply partner to limit the impact of Brexit on future material supplies and we also look to engage local business where possible, however the supply of core products to assist in the manufacture of our materials may be an issue. The impact of workforce is not currently a concern	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Unable to assess currently due to the level of uncertainty.	Unable to assess currently due to the level of uncertainty.
CMT	Medium Term Financial Plan	Insufficient resources to deliver services at expected level. Negative impact on staff morale. Budget pressures will have an impact upon service delivery.	The Authority has a strong track record of delivering balanced budgets and planning is underway to ensure that the 2021/22 Draft Budget Proposals are presented to Cabinet on the 13th January 2021. <i>Housing requires a budget review to align its financial resources more effectively with its current service delivery</i>	We have faced an unprecedented situation this year with details of the 2021/22 Provisional LG Financial Settlement not being released by the Welsh Government until the 22nd December 2020 (normally received in October each year). The Provisional Settlement included a 3.1% uplift in WG funding for Caerphilly CBC and the 2021/22 Draft Budget Proposals were endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on the 13th January 2021. The 3.1% uplift in WG funding along with a proposed increase of 3.9% in the Council Tax will mean that no new savings will be required to balance the budget for the 2021/22 financial year. The Provisional Settlement does not cover the financial implications of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, both in terms of additional costs that continue to be incurred and income losses. These will continue to be funded through grants and the position will be kept under close review as we move into the new financial year. The future funding situation for Local Government is likely to be challenging due to the unprecedented fiscal impact of the pandemic and the strain that this will put on public finances for years to come. An updated indicative Medium-Term Financial Plan shows a potential savings requirement for the council of £20.7m for the four-year period 2022/23 to 2025/26. The council's transformation programme will be a key driver in ensuring that financial resilience is maintained in future years. <i>The remaining savings identified for Housing (£52k) are not expected to be achieved this year because they are focussed on Private Sector Housing activity which has been unable to progress due to the lockdown, particularly when access to residents homes are needed to complete works. In addition there has been a high level of recurring long term sickness absences within the department, and also some staff were redeployed to more critical services such as the buddy scheme and contact tracing. Committed work will become backlogs for the following year which will need adequate resources to manage and complete .</i>	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Effective financial planning is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.	High (Short to Medium term)
CMT	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme	Everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community. To help achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). Failure to meet WHQS for all our social housing stock by 2020.	The WHQS programme has its own specific risk register which is reviewed and updated by the Project Board quarterly. The highest risks are: ● Failure to achieve programme objectives - the probability level has reduced as we enter the final year of the programme despite delays being incurred as a consequence of the Covid pandemic. This is due to the progress already made on the programme and the announcement made by WG that local authorities would be provided with an extension of the deadline to December 2021 ● Arrangements have been implemented whereby the in-house workforce will pick up the majority of the remaining workload by moving resources from other contract areas. This includes a recent transfer of contracts from the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) of approximately 150 properties to ensure continuity of our in house workforce and to take advantage of the better performance and tenants satisfaction levels that are being experienced via our in house workforce. Some external works will continue to be undertaken by external contractors, but these are being closely monitored and nearing a conclusion This has been reflected in a recent progress report which was made available to members of H&R Scrutiny committee. Monthly Project Board meetings will continue to be held to monitor ongoing performance and to assist with the decision making process. The completion date for full compliance is currently projecting August 2021 which is still within the revised WG deadline date.	The programme is now constantly being reviewed and more work undertaken in-house to provide us with a level of certainty and control as we move towards the final stages of the programme. There are some concerns in relation to contracts which include leasehold properties as these are incurring significant delays due to the need to follow legal consultation processes and subsequent challenges from leaseholders. This situation is currently being closely monitored and has been raised with WG who advise that other authorities have encountered similar problems. A significant percentage of work to the sheltered housing schemes is being undertaken by the in-house workforce. The programme is progressing with works on track to be completed by the revised 2021 deadline, however due to work content and asbestos issues, three schemes will require full decants which may delay completion, but discussions with WG indicate that these can be categorised as acceptable fails. Internal work was originally suspended as a consequence of the Covid pandemic but reinstated following further guidance from WG. External works have continued although progress has been affected due to material supplies, social distancing and some households preferring not to have work undertaken at this time. Further lockdown arrangements could obviously impact on our performance, but regular meetings are taking place with WG and indications are that we will still complete the programme in advance of the revised deadline of December 2021 The Housing Revenue Account business plan submitted to WG in March 2020 did not account for Covid-19 but high-level updates have been run through the plan to consider additional costs associated with social distancing measures and rent arrears, and the plan remains viable with the possibility of additional borrowing. The borrowing cap agreed by Council was £85m in total. HRA surpluses are generally utilised towards funding the WHQS Programme and then earmarked for potential new build options and decarbonisation works once the programme has been achieved. This is still the case albeit the timeline has moved on. General Fund Housing is utilising its Homelessness Prevention funding in an attempt to reduce homelessness, evictions and Bed & breakfast accommodation as well as providing temporary accommodation as part of its statutory duty. During Covid-19, pressure was placed on this service to accommodate homeless persons and on average 60 people per month continue to be accommodated. This is funded by the WG Covid-19 hardship fund.	Green	Green	Green	Green	Medium	Yes - Low quality housing impacts the health and well-being of tenants and there is a vast array of empirical evidence that shows good quality housing, located in sustainable communities is known to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of its occupants. 'A healthier Wales'. Providing good quality housing also contributes to 'A More Equal Wales', giving people a chance to fulfill their potential.	Medium
	Homelessness	Demand for homelessness fluctuates considerably based on demand, demographics and changing legislation and the Covid pandemic, The service needs to be flexible to adapt to these changes and have a number of options available to be able to support individuals and where necessary provide suitable accommodation to discharge the homelessness duty.	Support providers and specialists used to provide support to assist those that are homeless and to sustain tenancies to avoid homelessness occurring. Homelessness strategy developed in collaboration with neighbouring authorities. The availability of temporary accommodation to be reviewed to reduce/avoid use of Bed & Breakfasts. Look at opportunities to increase the availability of properties in the private sector as an alternative means of accommodating homeless persons. Work closely with the police and probation service to plan accommodation for prison leavers. Review the type of accommodation that is required to meet the needs of those presenting to the service forward so that this can be considered in longer term future planning	The Covid pandemic has resulted in increased pressures on this service, however this will be an ongoing process due to lockdown arrangements, policy and legislative changes. Cornerstone, The Wallich and Gofal are main support providers, but additional support provided by in-house Occupational Therapy, and mental health provision. Regional Homelessness Strategy has been completed and agreed actions being progressed. Use of Bed & Breakfast has seen an increase this year, therefore additional temporary accommodation is actively being sourced, with some success. Good success has been achieved in the private sector, with approximately 85 properties and 44 landlords currently being used to assist with homelessness via the Caerphilly Keys initiative. The prison leavers pathway has been implemented and is assisting in the forward planning of suitable accommodation for relevant persons. Out of county placements have been necessary to provide emergency accommodation following the closure of in county hotel and B&B businesses. Success achieved for additional funding from WG of approx £1m. A new Housing Solutions Manager has been appointed following the retirement of the previous postholder.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Yes - Being homeless can increase a persons chances of experiencing physical and or mental health problems. Relieving homelessness and the need to sleep rough will reduce costs to the council, the criminal justice system and health service. Contributing to 'A healthier Wales' and 'A more equal Wales'.	Medium

	<p>Universal Credit (U.C.)</p>	<p>Following central governments welfare reform, Universal credit was introduced in CCBC for all new claimants in September 2018. This combines potentially 6 benefit claims into one monthly payment which is made in arrears to the claimant. This payment could include housing costs. The risk to the housing service is the financial impact this system could have on the tenant, the impact on sustaining tenancies and increased rent arrears</p>	<p>Additional support has been provided to Universal Credit claimants via Tenant Support, Welfare Benefit and Floating Support Officers, including assistance with claim completions, budgeting and basic debt advice, warm homes discount scheme, subsidised water tariffs, applications for charitable assistance, food parcels, Personal Independent Payment applications and referrals to employability programmes. Due to the potential impact on individuals as well as rental income, quarterly reports have been presented to PDM. Resources regularly reviewed and impact on rents is closely monitored.</p>	<p>Rent arrears have continued to increase with the roll out of U.C. and partly due to the ongoing pandemic situation and as a consequence a Financial Crisis helpline has been opened and additional support staff have been appointed. However this will not be sustainable, as households move onto U.C. If the current pattern continues then rent arrears will increase and it will not be financially viable to provide additional resources. WG have commissioned a study into the impact of U.C. in Wales and we will contribute to this exercise. Regular update reports are being provided to PDM. Discretionary Housing Payments continue to be used to provide temporary financial support to those who meet the criteria and advice provided in relation to rehousing options as a means of reducing rent costs. Face to face support has been replaced with remote support, which has been successful in maximising income, however formal rent recovery processes, including possession actions have been withdrawn and replaced with attempts to support, in line with WG guidance.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Medium</p>
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Year End 2020/21 Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people’s well-being

1. What went well during the year?

Despite the pandemic having a significant impact on society and multiple national lockdowns that have ensued over this period, and the reshaping of service delivery to deal with the urgent challenges presented by the pandemic, many of the actions we have devised to realize the successful outcome of this objective have performed well during the year and in many instances performed beyond our expectations.

- We are on target to meet the revised Welsh Government’s revised target date for ensuring tenants’ homes meets the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- We have managed to maintain and enhance levels of support to help people manage their accommodation and help people with their money.
- A housing association partner has completed the redevelopment of the former Caerphilly Magistrates Court into 34 x 1 and 2 bed apartments and 4 houses, all to Passivhaus standard.
- Utilised Welsh Government funding to provide temporary accommodation to homeless people during the pandemic.
- Significantly increased the number of tenants provided with support and advice to help mitigate the effects of welfare reform.
- Have exceeded the target of providing support to council tenants to access welfare benefits.
- Have exceeded the target for the value of financial savings generated for council tenants as a direct result of support.
- Appointed consultants to support the production of a new Local Housing Strategy.
- Our housing associations partners drew down £4.57m of Welsh Government grant to build new affordable homes.
- The Caerphilly Keys project continues to actively develop a pool of accessible quality, affordable private rented accommodation for people not able to access social housing.
- We continue to provide various forms of support to people who are homeless and rough sleepers.
- We continue to work closely with the Supporting People team to provide support for council tenants to enable them to maintain their tenancies.
- We are making good progress with the Supporting People team to develop a Housing First project for people with complex needs.

2. Is there anything that did not go well this year and what have we learnt?

The pandemic meant that, during the first two quarters of the year, the Council reshaped its services to provide support to vulnerable people and communities. Some of our services were deemed to be non-essential and staff were temporarily redeployed to support essential services, including the Buddy scheme. As a result, performance for these aspects of the service were below that reported in previous updates. Maintaining essential services whilst operating under the limitations of Covid guidance has been difficult, but the commitment and support provided by our staff has been excellent and clearly appreciated by our customers. The pandemic made it apparent that we were not sufficiently equipped to deliver all our services remotely, although it has also been shown that where staff were equipped it resulted in significant benefits for both staff and customers. It highlighted the need for changes to working practices and the provision of necessary IT equipment, to support the service and customers moving forward. If it were not for the pandemic, then we would not have seen the level of under-performance recorded during this period. We expect to see performance begin to recover during 2021-22 as the Covid-19 restrictions are eased and society returns to normal.

- The percentage of tenants satisfied with the internal works (WHQS programme) has fallen slightly.
- The percentage of tenants satisfied with the external works (WHQS programme) has fallen.
- Only made limited progress on an exercise to increase the percentage of social housing stock that has an accessibility code.
- Provided a smaller number of adaptations, grants and loans due to restrictions imposed by Welsh Government due to the pandemic and the associated redeployment of staff to support essential services.
- Failed to reach the target for empty properties being returned to beneficial use due to much-reduced levels of engagement and enforcement action against owners of long-term empty homes in the private sector due to reduced capacity in the team and Welsh Government pandemic related restrictions.
- Have been unable to access sufficient external funding to carry out all planned energy efficiency improvements to residents’ homes.
- Have needed to delay the implementation of the Post Asset Management Strategy due to the WHQS programme being extended by 12 months due to the pandemic.
- Work on a new Local Housing Market Assessment was temporarily postponed on the advice of Welsh Government.
- We were not able to draw down the full allocation of Social Housing Grant for new affordable homes due to delays in getting schemes through the planning and SAB approval systems.

3. What impact are we making?

There is an extensive body of empirical research which shows the positive impact good quality housing can have on people’s health and wellbeing. In addition, national and local performance indicators that we maintain also provide a sense of the positive impact the Council is having on people’s lives. This can range from providing good quality and affordable housing to providing support to people to maximise their household income and providing adaptations to enable disabled people to live independently, to tackling poor housing conditions in the private sector.

We collect a host of data of users’ interactions with the range of services we provide. This data is reviewed periodically by managers and where necessary reported to the Housing Management Team and scrutiny committee. Should the data show that a service is under-performing then measures will be put in place to improve performance. Although, data shows that parts of the service under-performed this year, when compared with previous years, we expect to see an upturn in performance as Covid-19 restrictions are eased and society returns to normal. We are currently completing the procurement of a new IT system which will enable us to improve the type and level of data we collect.

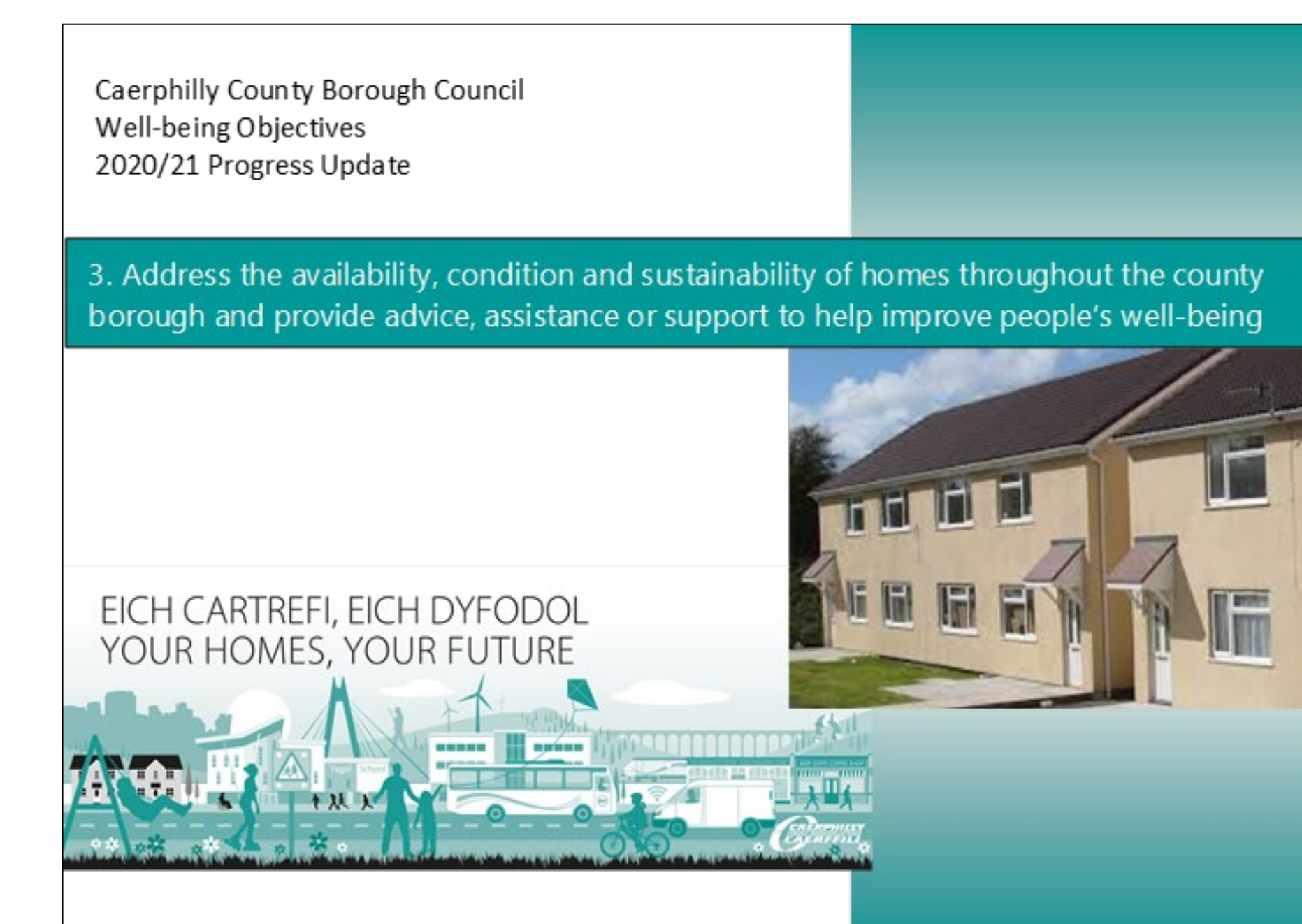
Parts of the service area also capture the impact our services make on people’s health and wellbeing by recording service user experiences. The information captured provides a sense check on the benefits of providing these services. We routinely report examples of service user experiences to Council via the committee process.

By using the 5 ways of working we know there should be a long-term positive impact on the wellbeing of Caerphilly residents. By completing these reviews, we can try to ensure that we make good progress to successfully achieving the intended outcome. The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides an effective framework to review existing services, where required, and to implement new services.

4. What are we focusing on next year?

Two years of this objective remains and some of the actions are yet to be completed, with other actions recurring annually. As we emerge out of the pandemic we will need to understand the full impact it has on society and what this means for the way we provide our services in the future. This may mean our priorities in the short term are not focused specifically on the actions devised to realise this objective. However, we do expect service performance to rebound in 2021/22 towards pre-pandemic level. As such, our focus next year will be on the following areas of work:

- All council housing is improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS);
- Increase the provision of new, affordable, social housing that meet the ‘Lifetime principles and identified needs, whilst supporting the governments’ innovative housing programme;
- Deliver adaptations to support the health and well-being of people in their homes and maximise the delivery and appropriate use of accessible homes;
- Increase the supply of housing by supporting opportunities to bring long-term, empty homes in the private sector back into use;
- Tackle the determinants of poor health and wellbeing by improving housing conditions in the private sector;
- Prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping;
- Sustain tenancies by providing a range of housing related services; and
- Help reduce fuel poverty by making homes more energy efficient and providing people with advice on how best to heat their homes.



Five Ways of Working - 1. Involvement 2. Collaboration 3. Long Term 4. Integration 5. Prevention

1. A Prosperous Wales

2. A Resilient Wales

3. A Healthier Wales

4. A More Equal Wales

5. A Wales of Cohesive Communities

6. A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

7. A Globally Responsible Wales



Highlights coming out of the information

The Covid pandemic has clearly had a significant impact on services this year with core services being considerably reduced and staff redeployed to support wider Corporate community initiatives. Performance has also been impacted as a consequence but essential services have continued to be provided as well as assistance to our most vulnerable groups of clients. There have been some staffing issues with some deciding to terminate their employment, which has assisted in some areas but also resulted in the loss of key staff in other areas. Financially we continue to be in a good position and have been successful in accessing various grant funded opportunities from WG. Good progress continues to be made in some of our key project areas including the WHQS programme and our new build strategy, whilst essential services in other areas including priority adaptations, homelessness, older persons housing, repairs and tenancy support have continued and have been well received. Allocations have also continued to address housing need, in accordance with relevant WG guidance. Services that we provide that have been deemed non-essential have been suspended for much of the year in line with WG guidance and/or at the request of our clients, thereby impacting on our performance e.g. processing of routine adaptations, private sector property inspections, grants and loans, internal WHQS works with many staff redeployed for significant periods to support critical services across the Authority. However, performance in other areas has improved, e.g. support provided to tenants to assist them in sustaining their tenancies. We have also introduced the provision of financial advice and support to residents across the county borough in financial distress, in recognition of the impacts of Covid on our communities. The Valleys Task Force initiative has proved successful in engaging the owners of long term empty homes and it is anticipated that the project, together with the planned creation of a new Empty Properties Team will impact positively on our performance next year in returning empty private sector properties to use.

What have we learnt and what needs improving and why?

During the ongoing pandemic it has been apparent that we were not sufficiently equipped to deliver all our services remotely, although it has also shown that where staff have been equipped this has resulted in significant benefits for the staff and our customers. Generally staff have responded extremely well in the circumstances and been committed to and supported in continuing to deliver Housing related services and/or been willing to be redeployed to support other areas of the authority. The situation has also highlighted the importance of having our own in-house workforce that we can directly manage and utilise to best meet our and customers needs. There is now a move to ensure that we have the required IT equipment and systems in place for the future which support agile working and a need to review our existing systems and processes to ensure they are suitable for a change in working practices. The impact of Covid will be demonstrated in future performance reports as backlogs resulting from the consequences of lockdown are addressed and reinstated services are prioritised in line with capacity of the service and, where relevant, contractors e.g. number of days taken to provide adaptations. As a consequence of Covid there has been a significant increase in demand for our homelessness services with higher numbers of presentations and placements in emergency temporary accommodation. There has also been a significant increase in the use of hotels and Bed & Breakfast accommodation in order to comply with new guidance issued by WG although alternative options for the provision of emergency temporary accommodation are continually being sought with some success. Moving forward we need to ensure that the Housing Solutions Service is able to respond proactively and meet the

Progress against priority actions from last quarter	By Whom	By when	Update
Limited progress made as a result of the Covid pandemic which has impacted services across the board. However it is considered that in the circumstances essential services have been delivered safely and efficiently and a number of core services have also continued.			
Reprofile the WHQS programme in light of the revised deadline issued by WG and review options for addressing the backlog of services accumulated during the pandemic		Dec-21	The WHQS programme has been reprofiled in light of the revised deadline issued by WG and, whilst some progress has been made, options continue to be reviewed for addressing the backlog of services accumulated during the pandemic
Review support and methods of rent recovery to address the increase in rent arrears		Completed	The Rents Service has developed a post Covid recovery plan that embraces new ways of working, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and a person centred approach.
Continue to source alternatives for the provision of emergency accommodation to address increasing homelessness demand, to include move on accommodation			We continue to review and seek to source suitable forms of emergency accommodation to address demand, including HMO properties, leased properties from RSL partners and bed and breakfast accommodation. We continue to work with social and private sector landlords to maximise the move on to permanent accommodation and this has included the use of WG funding to purchase 6 additional units of accommodation for social rent and the refurbishment of 6 units in the private sector that we are able to offer to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
Priority Actions for next quarter	By Whom	By when	Update
Address the needs of Rough Sleepers, repeat presentations and those with complex needs ensuring we have an effective holistic person centred assessment process to undertake the welfare and support needs assessment to maximise prevention.			
Reopening of the Housing Grants and Loans systems to new applicants.		Jun-21	
Procurement of a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey of Council tenants.		Jun-21	
Ensure the start on site of the Trecenydd and Trethomas Passivhaus new Caerphilly Homes developments	JRW	Jun-21	
Award the Land Appraisal Contract to a multidisciplinary consultancy to begin the process of examining the suitability of HRA, General Fund and privately owned land for development (including the start of the due diligence related to the Ness Tar / Pesci site)	JRW	Jun-21	
To look at setting up targets / aims for bringing back empty homes into usage (new)	DS		
To explore DFG process to understand where improvements can be made	DS		
Feedback / Recognition / Actions from Corporate Management Team	By Whom	By when	Update
Chief exec is interested in how up and coming WG programme for government will impact housing, particularly homelessness and use of B&B	DS	Update Sept	