

Peter Turner
Director of Finance
London Borough of Bromley
Civic Centre
Stockwell Close
Bromley
BR1 3UH

Date: 6 December 2013

Our Ref: AIF/GT

Dear Peter,

As we approach the January Executive & Resources PDS meeting where we consider and review the performance of the Benefits service, we take this opportunity to write to you with Liberata's assessment of the performance of this critical high profile service that we provide to London Borough of Bromley (LBB) and its citizens.

This summary covers performance for the period 1st April 2013 to 30th September 2013.

1. Current Status of the Benefits Service

The Benefits caseload, which measures all households receiving Housing and/or Council Tax Support was 23,580 at the end of September 2013. There continues to be a decrease in the volume of incoming documents and associated claims.

This year has seen the introduction of Welfare Reform which includes the implementation of the Benefit Cap as one of the four pilot authorities. There have been approximately 140 households in Bromley affected by the Cap since April 2013.

Further changes to Welfare Reform have included the Social Rent Restriction. This has seen an increase in the number of Discretionary Housing Payments being requested by customers. We have also seen an increase in the number Temporary Accommodation claims being received.

1.1 Claims and Work Outstanding

As at the 30th September 2013, 812 documents were awaiting review and possible action and a further 1,503 items pending awaiting information from the claimant and/or third-party.

1.2 Right Time Indicator

In terms of our current position for the nationally recognised Right Time Indicator, our performance as at 30th September 2013 was 16.93 days against the monthly target for the first six months of the year of 18.00 days. In February 2014 we will commence the processing of rent increases which will positively impact on our Right Time Indicator.

1.3 Quality

The September 2013 error rate of 6.9% shows a deterioration compared to the same time last year when it was 3.83%. The contractual target is for an accuracy rate of a minimum of 95%.

We are taking urgent steps to rectify this position and will be introducing 'careless error' workshops which will be extremely useful in driving down error rates within the service. We will also be increasing our quality resource to increase the number of checks carried out on each assessment officer.

1.4 Overpayment Strategy

The creation of overpayments is a natural by product of the administration of Housing & Council Tax Support. The nature of this work is an ever increasing challenge due to the economic downturn.

New initiatives have significantly contributed to the increased recovery rate of 75.54% as at the end of September 2013. This exceeds last years performance as at September 2012 which was 70.70%. We continue to use a solicitors firm that specialises in debt recovery. They send out letters which are followed up by phone calls. They are also used to assist in obtaining County Court Judgements on some of our highest debts. This continues to be a highly effective debt recovery process.

2. Call Centre & Customer Services

The number of customers seen in customer services for the period April 2013 to September 2013 totalled 32,080. during this period 89% of customers were seen within 15 minutes, exceeding our contractual target by 4%.

During the same period the Call Centre (Help Line) received 118,437 calls with 96.8% of calls answered. Callers have had an average queue time of 14 seconds before being answered by an officer.

3. Service Developments

Liberata's goal is to continue to improve and enhance the services provided to LBB and its citizens through the introduction of innovative and effective solutions.

Examples of current year new and ongoing initiatives;

- We will shortly be re-introducing call recording on the Revenues & Benefits Call Centre now that we have rectified the issue of the recording of payment details
- Continued use of an independent solicitor's firm to aid our recovery of overpayments
- As part of our recovery process we have also introduced visiting debtors at home in the evenings and at weekends. This enables us to make contact and make repayment arrangements with debtors

- Increasing our permanent resource on the Bromley Benefits Assessment Team at our Shared Service Centre in Redcar
- After a health check on our Temporary Accommodation team we introduced processes to enable us to get rent accounts set up in a more timely manner so as to ensure we were able to apply Housing Benefit efficiently
- Since the introduction of ATLAS automation we have seen a reduction in overpayments as a result of the immediate suspensions which has resulted in a more efficient allocation of resource

4. Investment in the community

Liberata is keen to play an active and constructive part in the Bromley community. We have been working in collaboration with the London Borough of Bromley on events.

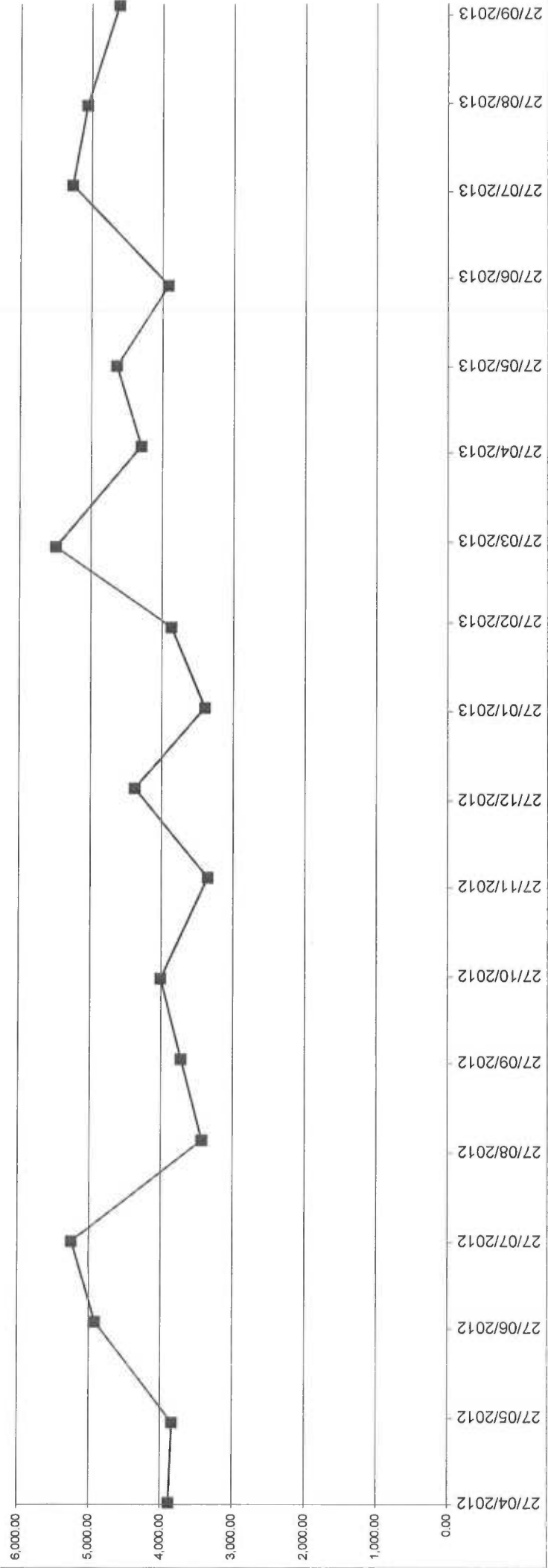
In December 2013 we will be working with the United Reformed Church, to provide Christmas presents to approx 90 people who will attend the lunch held at the church on Christmas day. The organisers are grateful for the continued co-operation, support and gifts at what can be a difficult time of the year for the vulnerable people in the community.

Liberata remains firmly committed to delivering an outstanding service to the London Borough of Bromley and its citizens.

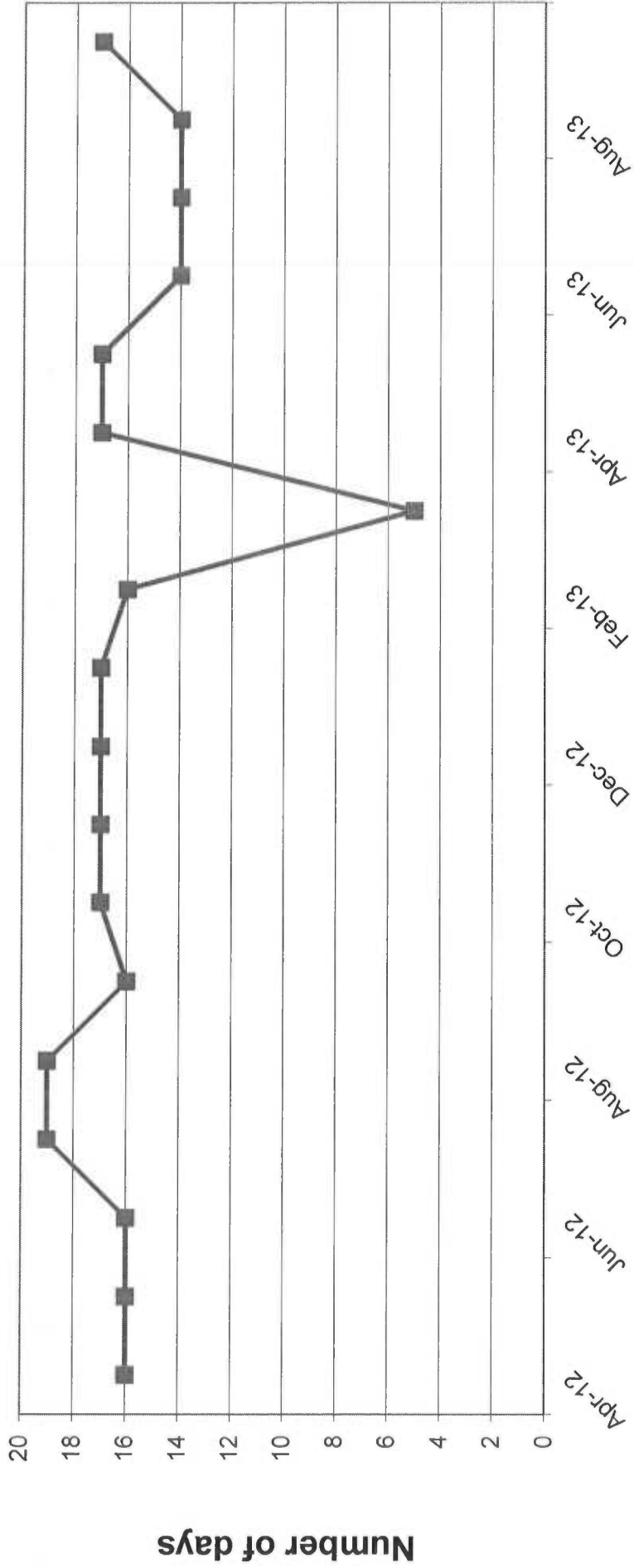
Yours sincerely,

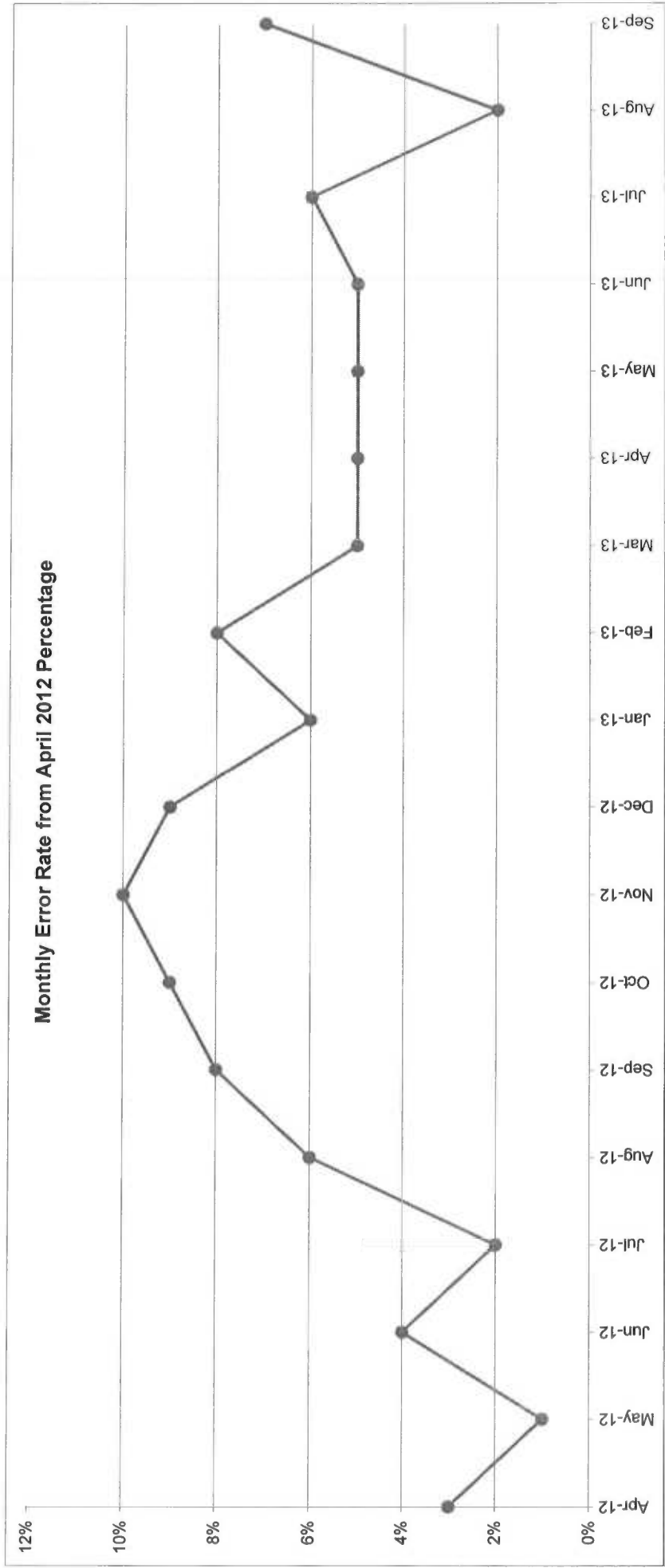
Amanda Inwood-Field
Contract Director

**Total Pending & Outstanding Work
April 2012 to September 2013**

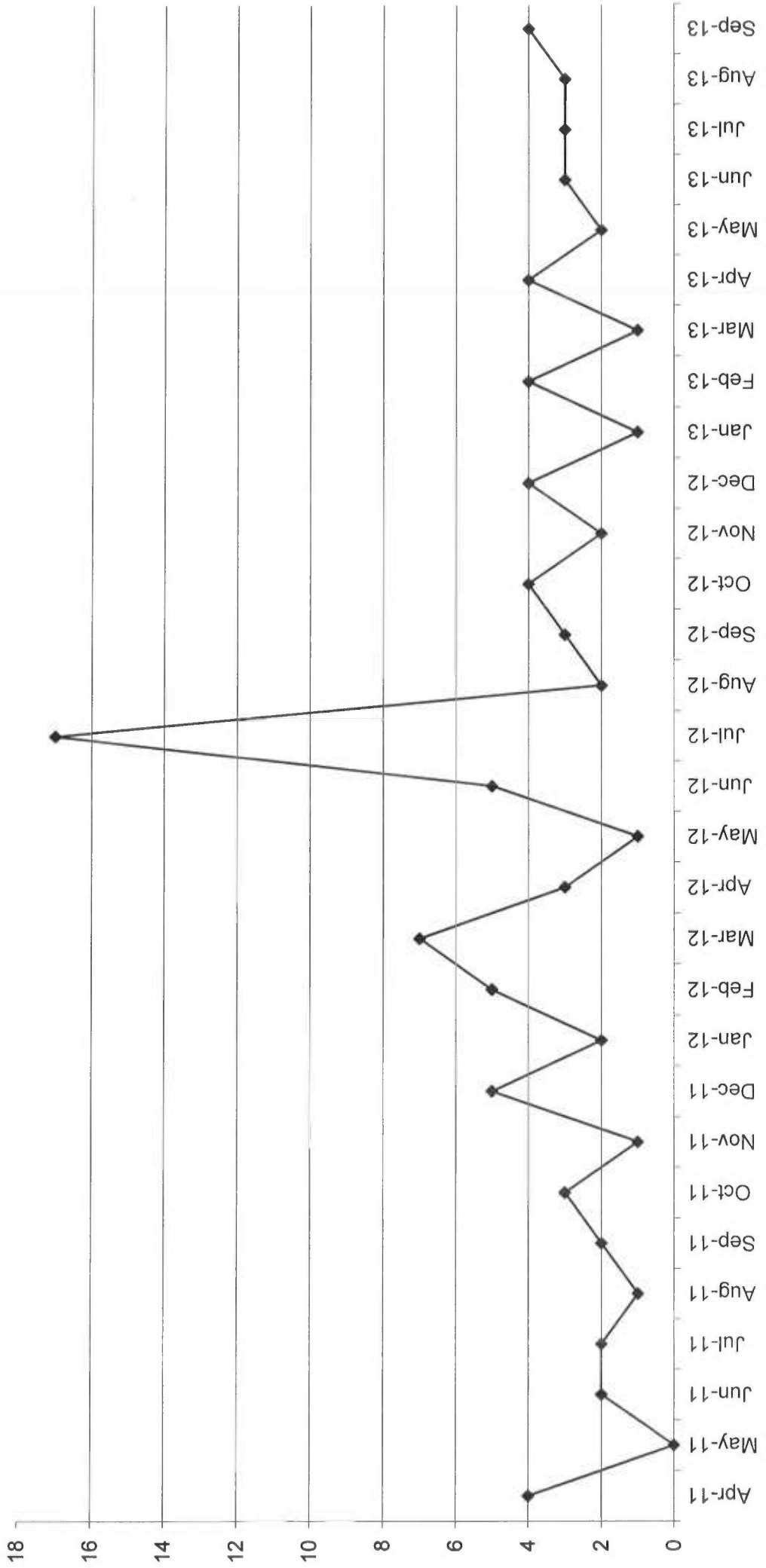


Right Time Indicator April 2012 - September 2013

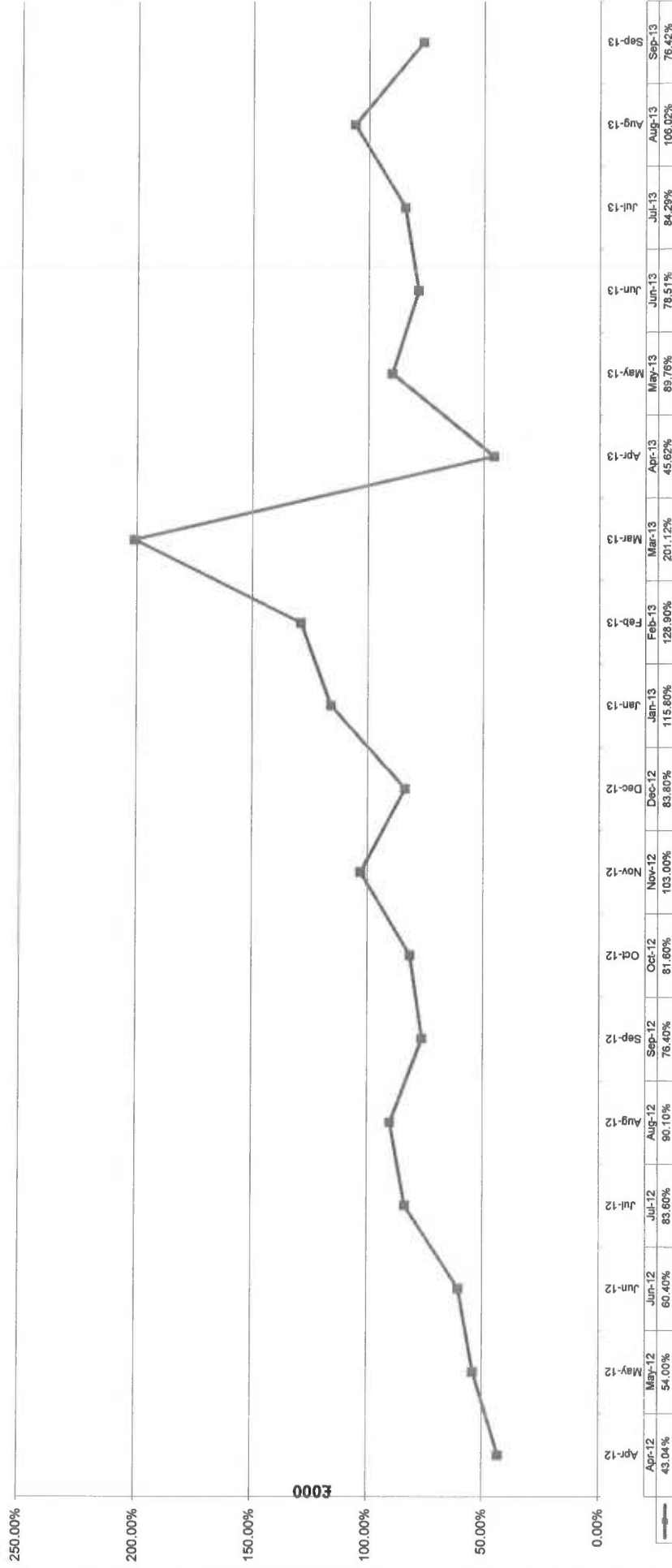




Housing and Council Tax Benefit Stage 2 Complaints from April 2011



Monthly Overpayment % recovered against that created From April 2012



Calls Received and Abandoned by Month from April 2012

