

John Nightingale
Head of Revenues and Benefits
London Borough of Bromley
Civic Centre
Stockwell Close
Bromley
BR1 3UH

Date: 9 June 2014

Our Ref: AIF/GT

Dear John,

As we approach the July 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 October 2013 to 31st March 2014.

1. Current Status of the Benefits Service

The Benefits caseload, which measures all households receiving Housing and/or Council Tax Support was 23,195 at the end of March 2014. There continues to be a decrease in the volume of incoming documents and associated claims.

This financial year 2013/14 saw the introduction of Welfare Reform which included the implementation of the Benefit Cap. There have been approximately 309 households in Bromley affected by the Cap for 2013/14.

We continue to see an increase in the number of Discretionary Housing Payments being requested by customers due to the Social Rent Restriction. The number of Temporary Accommodation claims also continue to increase and reflect the changes implemented through the reform.

1.1 Claims and Work Outstanding

As at the 31st March 2014, the total amount of outstanding work was 7255 items which includes 2142 items pending awaiting information from the claimant and/or third-party.

The outstanding items are higher than normal due to the time of year and also includes DWP ATLAS files which has hugely inflated the workload.

1.2 Right Time Indicator

In terms of our current position for the nationally recognised Right Time Indicator, our average performance as at 31st March 2014 was 13.6 days against the year end target of 13.00 days.

Plans have now been put in place to improve this position for 2014/15.

1.3 Quality

We have encountered a number of issues in regards to quality. These were due to the fact that we brought in a number of agency temps into the service as well as inexperienced permanent assessors. The average error rate for 2013/14 was 7.27%.

We acknowledge that we are outside of compliance and have taken remedial action to improve our position. Our quality recovery plan has been shared with the client which commits to being back on target by the end of June 2014. Ongoing plans have also been made to sustain this position going forward.

We continue to run 'careless error' workshops and have increased our targeted checking of individuals. We have also increased our quality and training resource to support our new recruits and drive down errors. A higher number of checks are now being carried out on assessment officers concentrating particularly on the more complex assessments.

1.4 Overpayment Strategy

The creation of overpayments is a natural bi-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 86.96% as at the end of March 2014. This exceeds last years performance as at March 2013 which was 86.64%.

We continue to use proactive measures to assist in our recovery technique. This includes the use of visiting officers to make contact with debtors at home. We also employ a solicitors firm to 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.

Blameless tenant recovery continues to be an effective tool in recovering debts from landlords that receive benefit for multiple tenants.

2. Revenues and Benefits Call Centre & Customer Services

The number of customers seen in customer services for the period April 2013 to March 2014 totalled 16,120. During this period 77.5% of customers were seen within 15 minutes, against a target of 85%. We acknowledge the need to improve our performance in this area and now have a plan in place to achieve and maintain compliance.

During the same period the Call Centre (Help Line) received 263,466 calls with 95% of calls answered. Callers have had an average queue time of 49 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;

- The use of an independent solicitor's firm to aid our recovery of overpayments including CCJ's as an option for our high value debts
- Continued use of visiting those overpaid in the evenings and at weekends to make contact and make arrangements for repayment
- Increasing our experienced permanent resource to strengthen our local assessment team
- Plans are being put in place to introduce front line assessors. This will consist of 2 experienced assessors working closely with Customer Services staff to process new claims

immediately on receipt. This will assist in improving our processing times and provide an excellent service to the residents of Bromley

- Further ATLAS automation is now being investigated as part of the new release of Academy. This will assist in minimising errors and provide an overall good customer service

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.

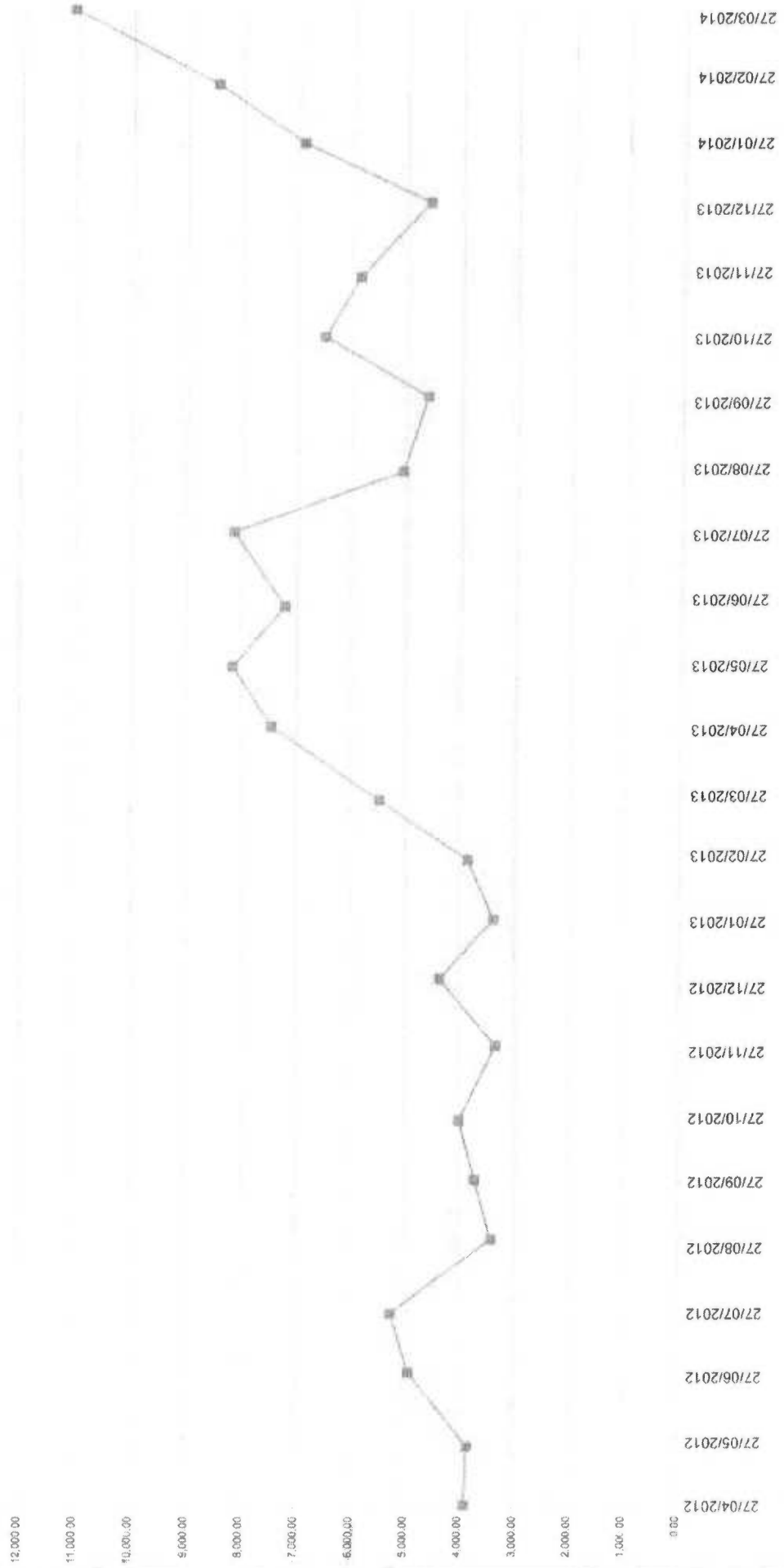
During 2013/14 we have donated to a number of local charities through our dress down and cake sale days. We also donated to the Mayor of Bromley's charity which hosts a Gala Charity Golf Day. It raised funds for Bromley Y which is an adolescent counselling service which assists young people within Bromley.

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

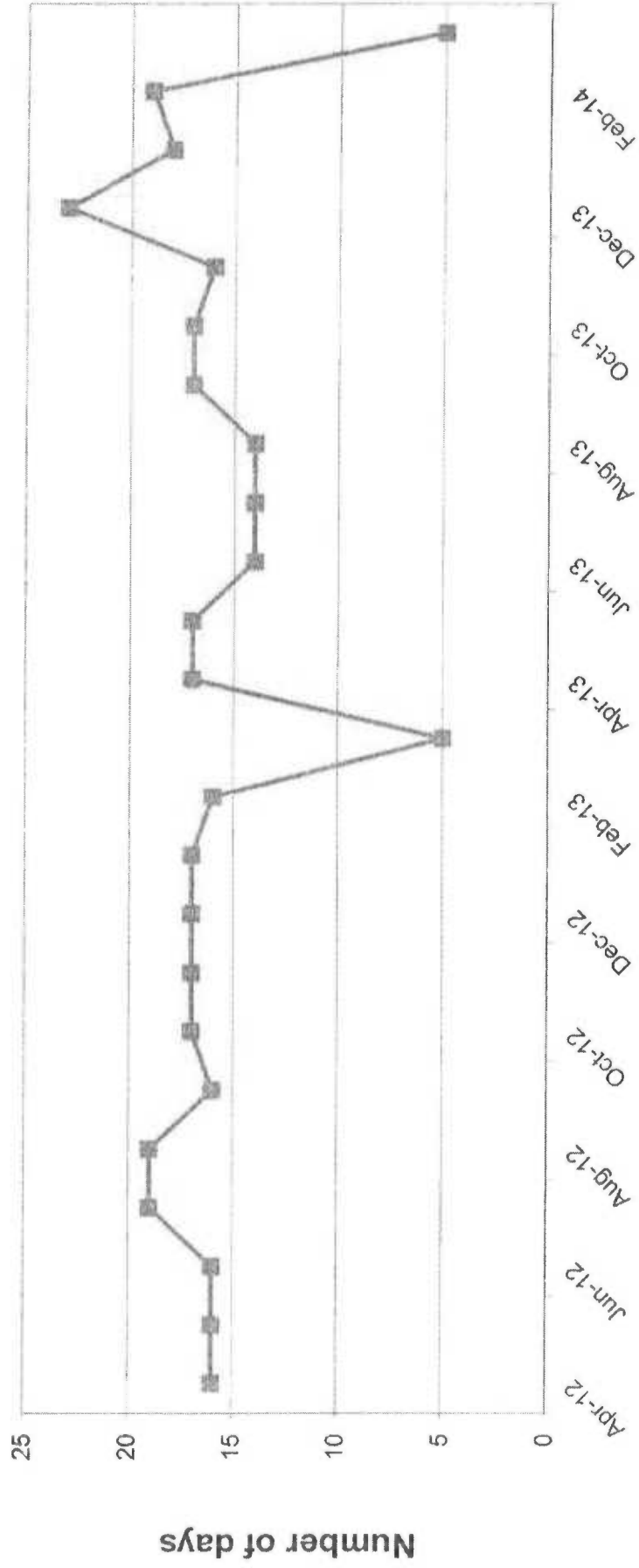
Yours sincerely,

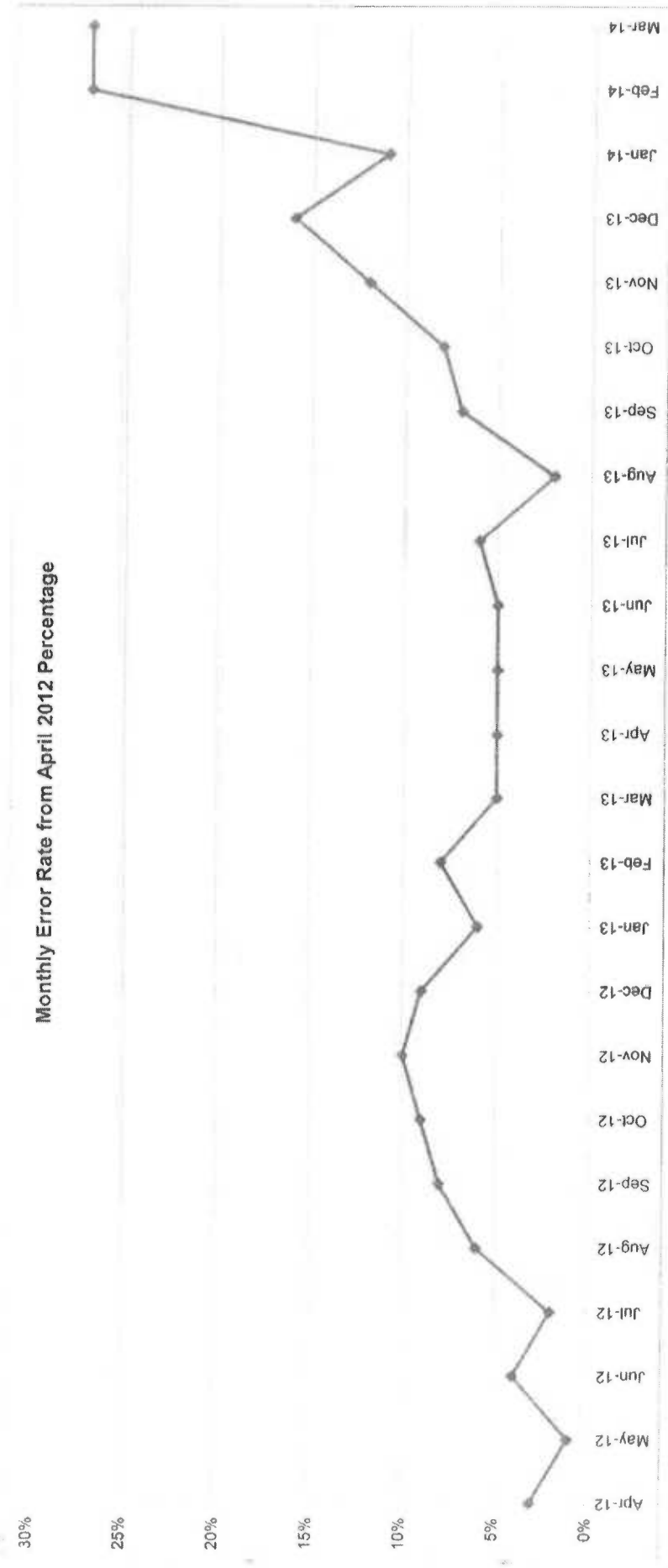
Amanda Inwood-Field
Contract Director

**Total Pending & Outstanding Work
April 2012 to March 2014**

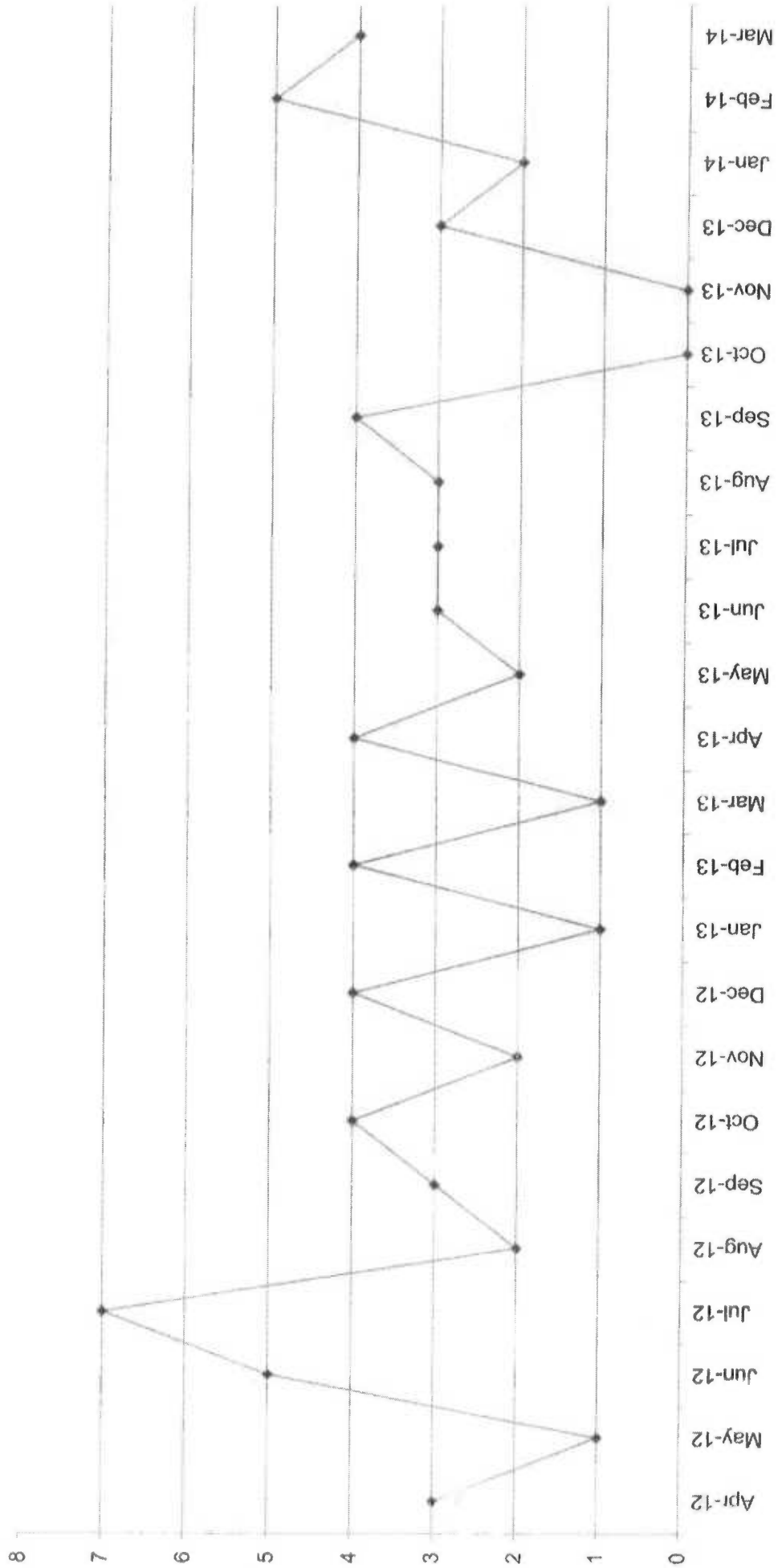


Right Time Indicator April 2012 - March 2014

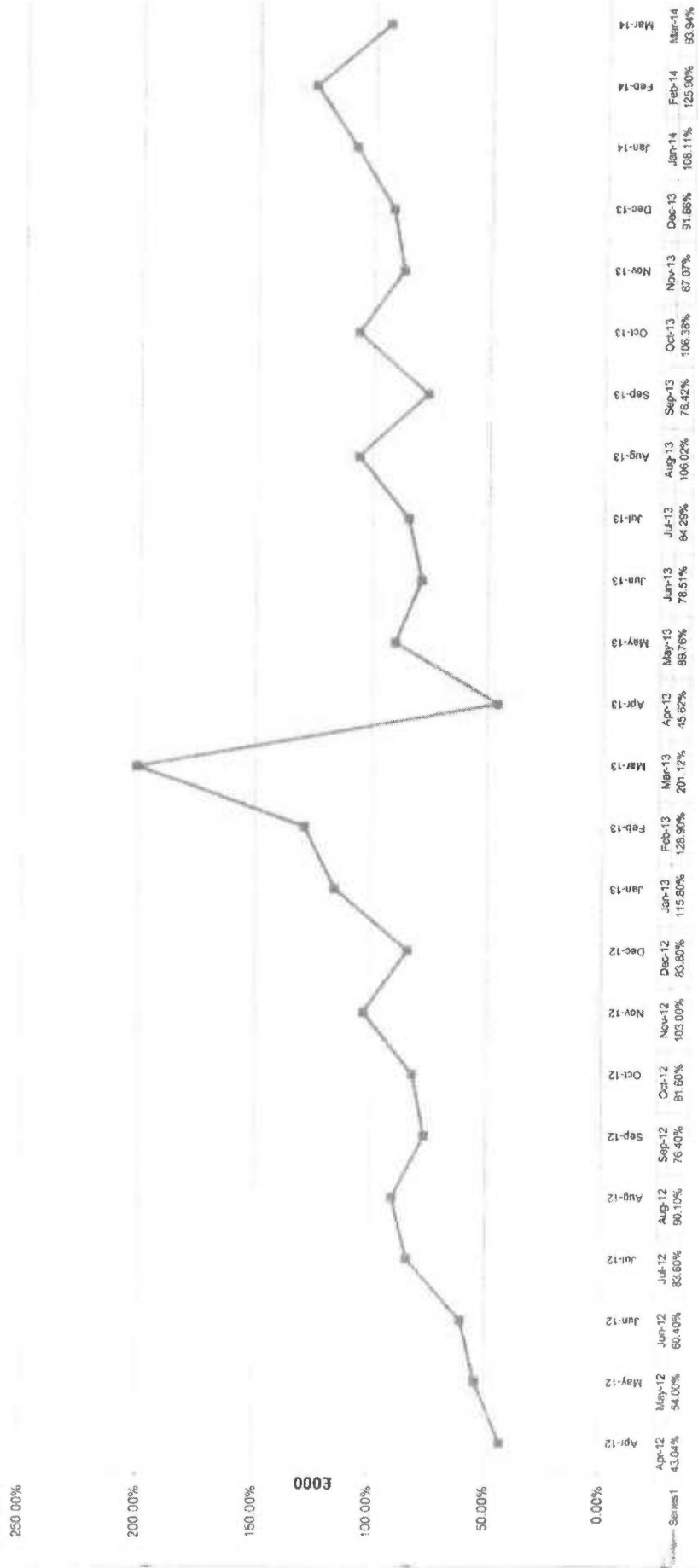




Housing and Council Tax Benefit Stage 2 Complaints from April 2012



Monthly Overpayment % recovered against that created From April 2012



Calls Received and Abandoned by Month from April 2012

