

John Nightingale  
Head of Revenues and Benefits  
London Borough of Bromley  
Civic Centre  
Stockwell Close  
Bromley  
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Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017

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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

### **1. Current Status of the Benefits Service**

The Benefits caseload, which measures all households receiving Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support, was 20,287 as at the end of March 2017. The caseload at the same time last year was 21,324.

In terms of our current position for the nationally recognised Right Time Indicator, our average performance was 10.20 days. This is against an annual contractual target of 13 days. The processing performance of New Claims was 19.36 days and Changes was 9.34 days.

Liberata are committed to continuous improvement and driving down the processing days of new claims and changes where possible. The use of the Capita 'Insight' software enables us to ensure that claims are processed within compliance which has a positive effect on our processing times.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the total amount of outstanding work was 3,963 items which includes 1,293 items pending awaiting information from the claimant and/or third-party.

### **1.1 Temporary Accommodation**

We continue to work closely with the Housing teams, Orchard and Shipman and have formed good relationships with Mears who are a newer stakeholder that we meet with on a monthly basis. As a result, benefit claims and related queries are dealt with promptly, minimising any potential delays.

The continued use of automated reports has proven successful, with the ability to identify any potential issues with benefit claims at the earliest opportunity. These reports outline the current position of a customer's benefit claim as well as their assessed entitlement once the claim has been processed. This enables rent arrears to be minimised and the number of queries from our stakeholders and customers to be significantly reduced. It also advises as to when a claim has been suspended prompting the housing officer to engage with the customer at the earliest opportunity.

We encourage our stakeholders and any new LBB Housing staff to take advantage of verification training which Liberata provide. This enables trained staff to verify original documents to the DWP's standards and submit the evidence to the Benefits Service facilitating the prompt processing of claims.

### **1.2 ATLAS**

ATLAS is a process of transferring data from the DWP systems to the Local Authority systems. The data reports on changes which may not have been reported by the customer. Notification of these changes ensure the entitlement of customers is correct and consistent with the information held by the DWP. We have automated the updating of the ATLAS files into our back office processing system. This has eliminated the potential of error through manual handling of and provided an enhanced customer experience as claims are updated promptly.

### **1.3 Quality**

We have remained firmly focused on quality and continue to make significant improvements in the accuracy of the assessments which are carried out. The average error rate for 2016/17 was 2.6%.

The results of our quality outturn demonstrates that the robust quality management framework is highly effective. We remain committed in ensuring that claims are processed accurately and to a high standard minimising the potential for error and the requirement for reworking.

### **1.4 Overpayment Strategy**

The creation of overpayments is a natural bi-product of the administration of Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support, with recovery needing to be sought from some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

The recovery rate as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 was 79.48%. Liberata continue to recover debts by using a variety of recovery techniques including Blameless Tennant.

We continue to receive Real Time Information (RTI) data matches from the DWP. This includes both 'Mandatory' RTI files and 'Optional' RTI files. LBB opted to receive the 'Optional' files which were introduced last year. They have proven to be as successful as the 'Mandatory' files in identifying undeclared or incorrect financial information pertaining to the customer. We have created a total of £699k worth of overpayments as a direct result of RTI data matching for the period April 2016 to March 2017.

Last year the DWP advised that Authorities will be given access to 'Wider Use of Real Time Information' (WURTI). This system which will allow benefit assessors to view a customer's working income in real time. WURTI will enable accurate assessments of benefit entitlement and reduce the potential for overpayments to be created.

#### **1.5 Universal Credit**

Bromley is now live with the first phase of migration to Universal Credit which only includes single working aged claimants. We have been advised by the DWP that Bromley will be fully live with Universal Credit for all new claim types from May 2018. We have a dedicated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who liaises directly with the DWP by email and telephone and ensure any requests from them are dealt within the DWP service level of 5 days.

### **2. Call Centre & Customer Services**

The number of Revenues & Benefits customers seen in Customer Services for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 totalled 43,610. During this period 87% of customers were seen within 15 minutes, against a target of 85%.

During the same period, the Contact Centre (Help Line) received 171,764 calls with 94% answered. Customers are continuing to sign-up and use MyBromley; this is having a demonstrable impact with call volumes reducing.

### **3. Service Developments**

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

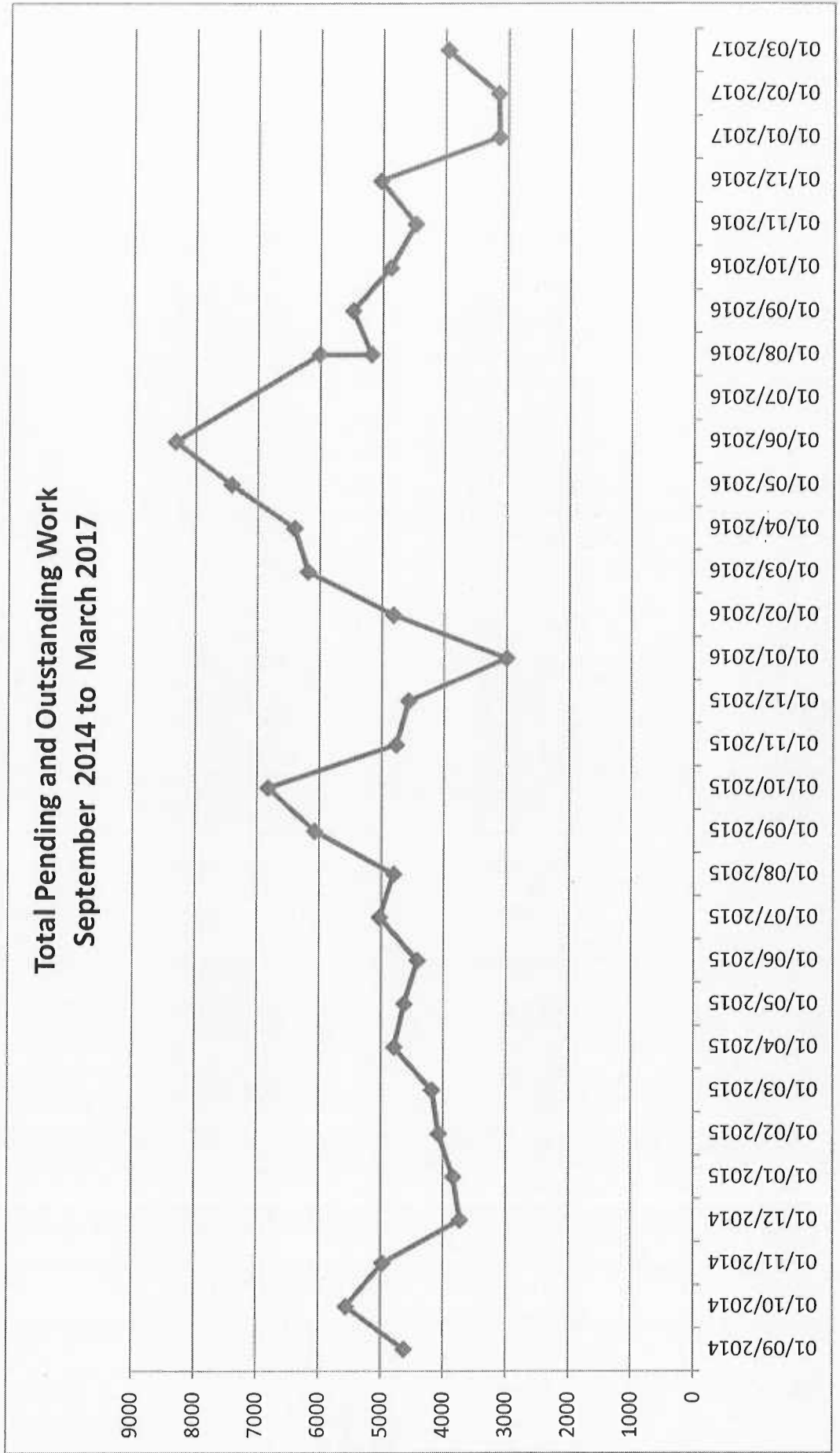
Examples of current year new and ongoing initiatives;

- Implementation of Capita Advantage Digital product. This will enable customers to use online forms to make a new claim or report changes to an existing claim. The information on the forms will be integrated with the back office processing system
- Academy 'Insight' is now live and provides support with process compliance and eliminates delays with processing times
- Automation of Real Time Information (RTI) HMRC data matches
- Successful piloting of the cross working of call centre and back office staff. This enables Call Centre Advisors to assist with processing of correspondence during quieter periods throughout the day
- Implementation WURTI (Wider Use of Real Time Information); this is a DWP initiative which allows benefit assessors to access a system and view a customer's salary information in real time
- Implementation of the Corporate Visiting Team (CVT) – The CVT work closely as a unit and undertake cross working within the various service lines. Revenues Inspectors and Adult Social Care Visiting Officers are now able to collect and verify benefits evidence. This has built resilience within the CVT.

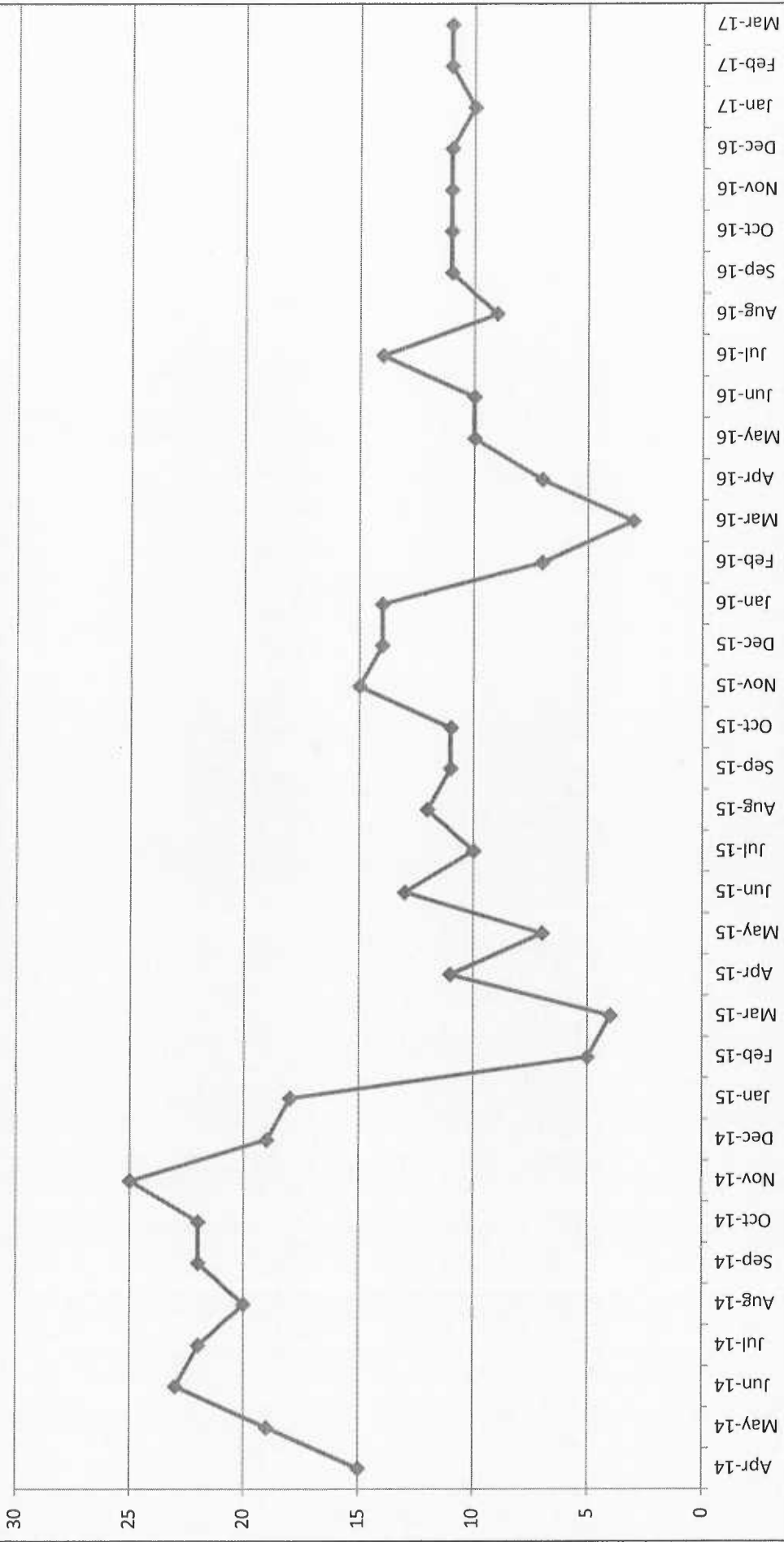
Liberata remains firmly committed to delivering an outstanding service to the London Borough of Bromley and its citizens.

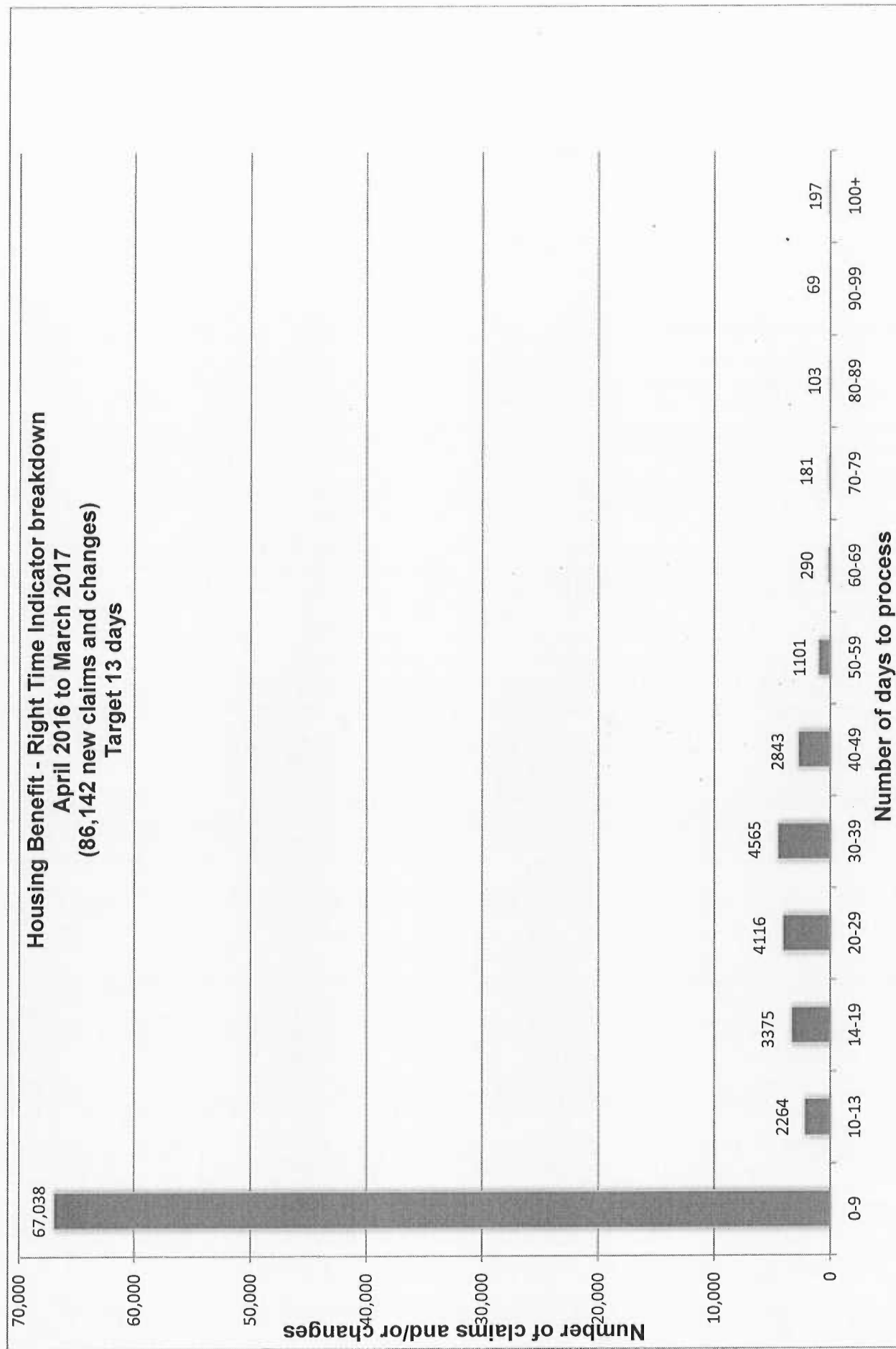
Yours sincerely,

Amanda Inwood-Field  
Contract Director

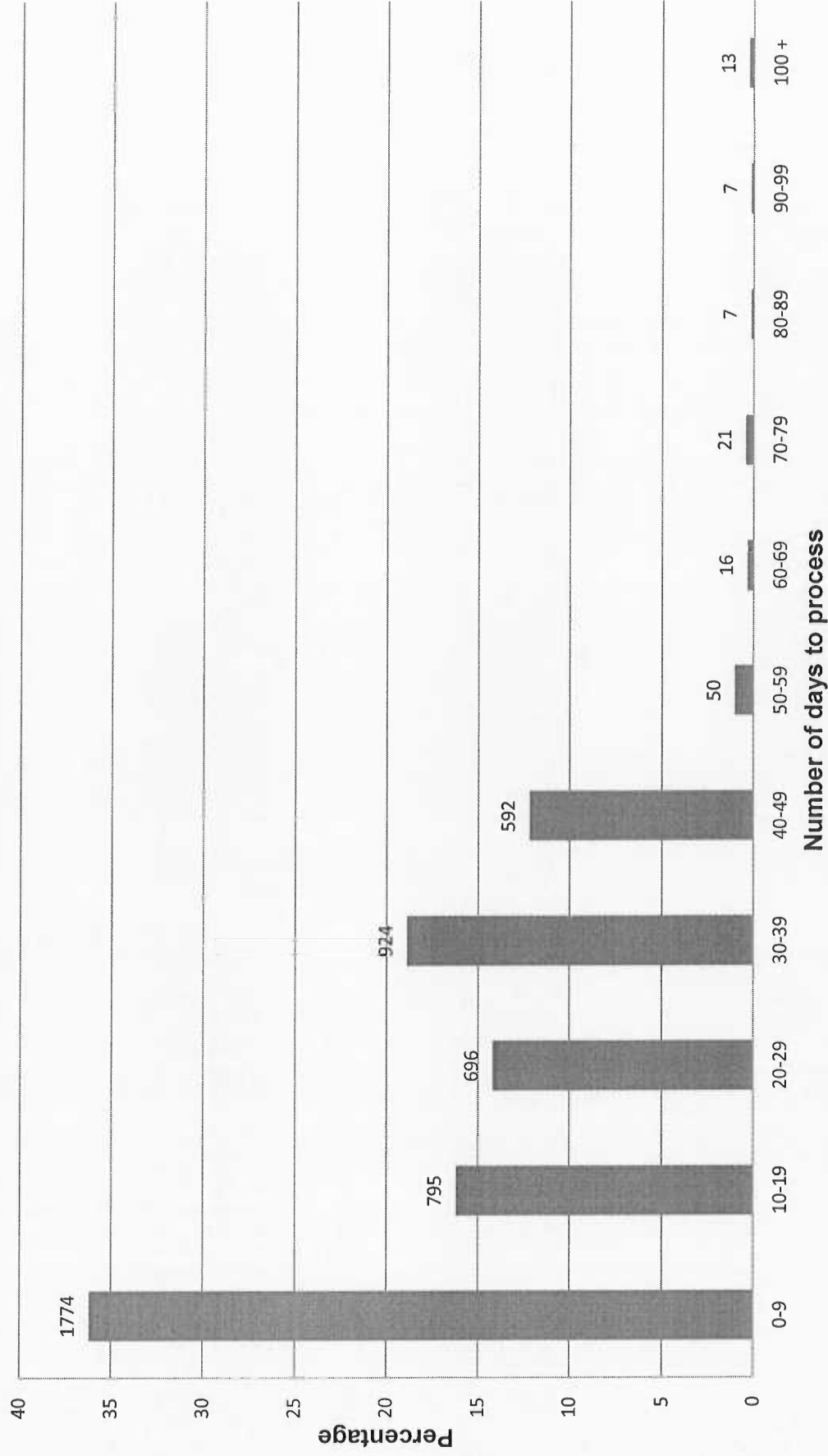


# Right Time Indicator April 2014 to March 2017





**Housing Benefit - processing time breakdown April 2016 to March 2017**  
**New Claims (4895 cases)**



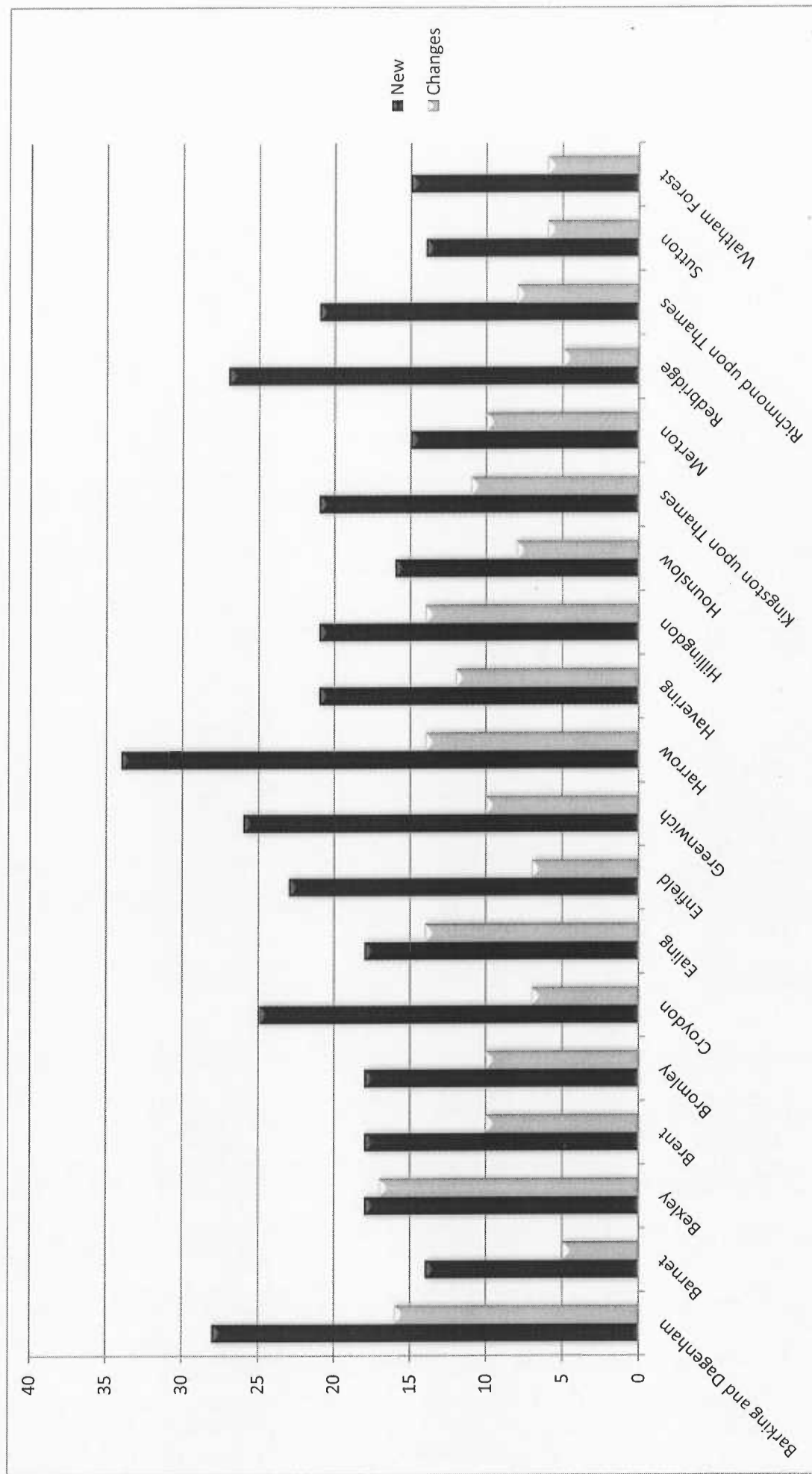


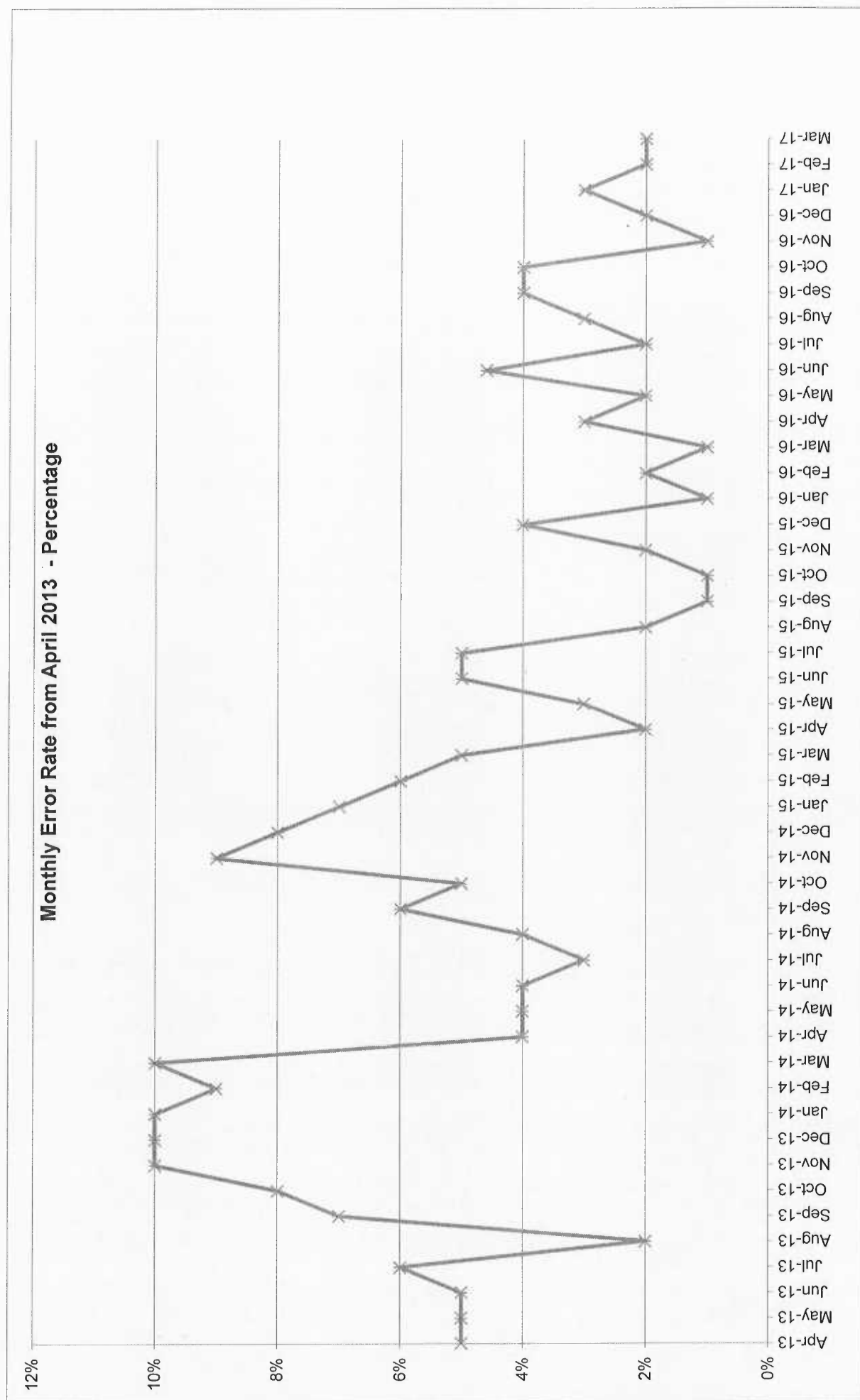
**Housing Benefit - processing time breakdown - April 2016 to March 2017**  
**Change in Circumstances (81,247)**



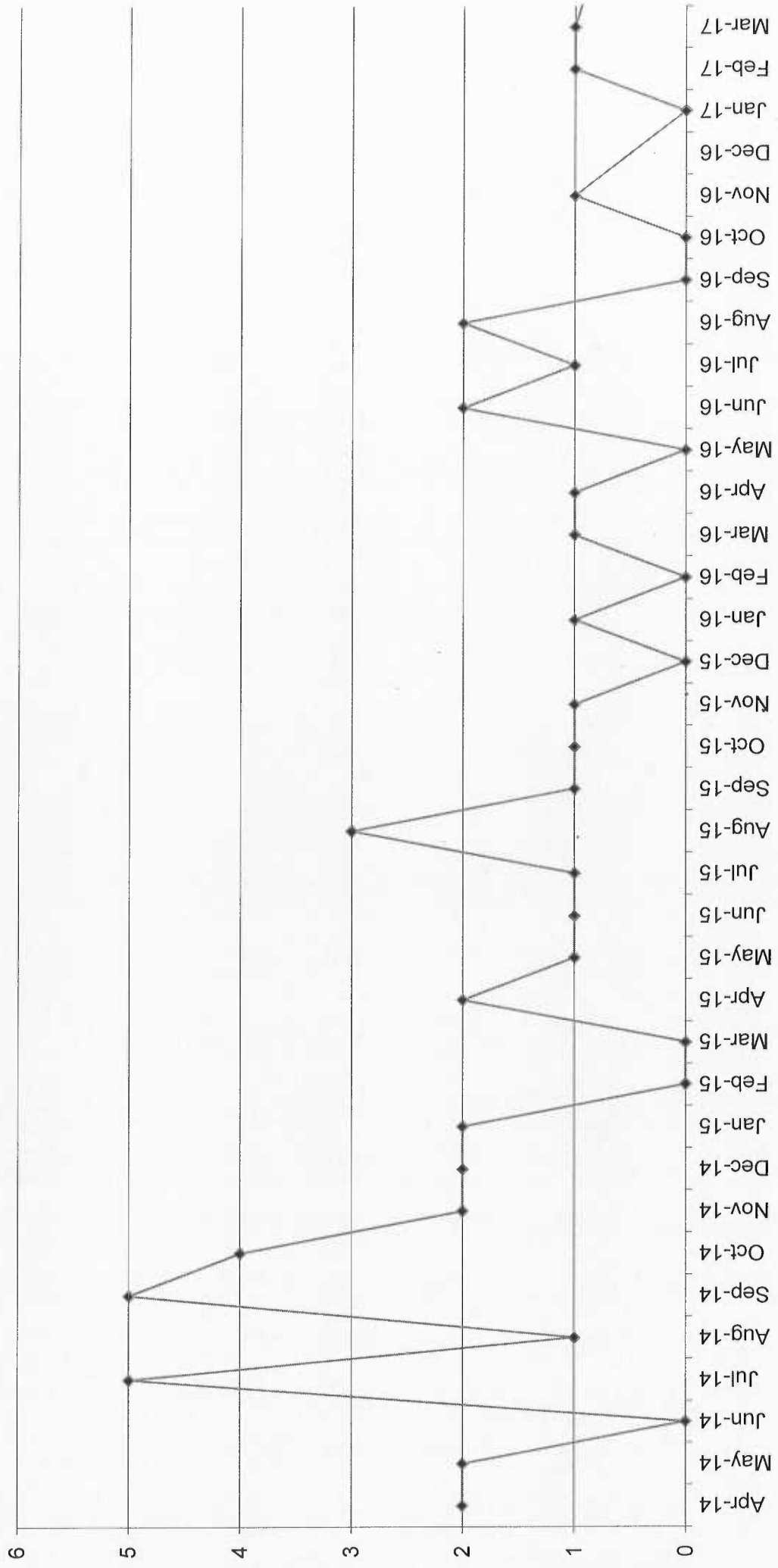
# DWP Speed of processing times of New Claims and Change In Circumstances October to December 2016 (Quarter 3 2016/17)

## Appendix 5

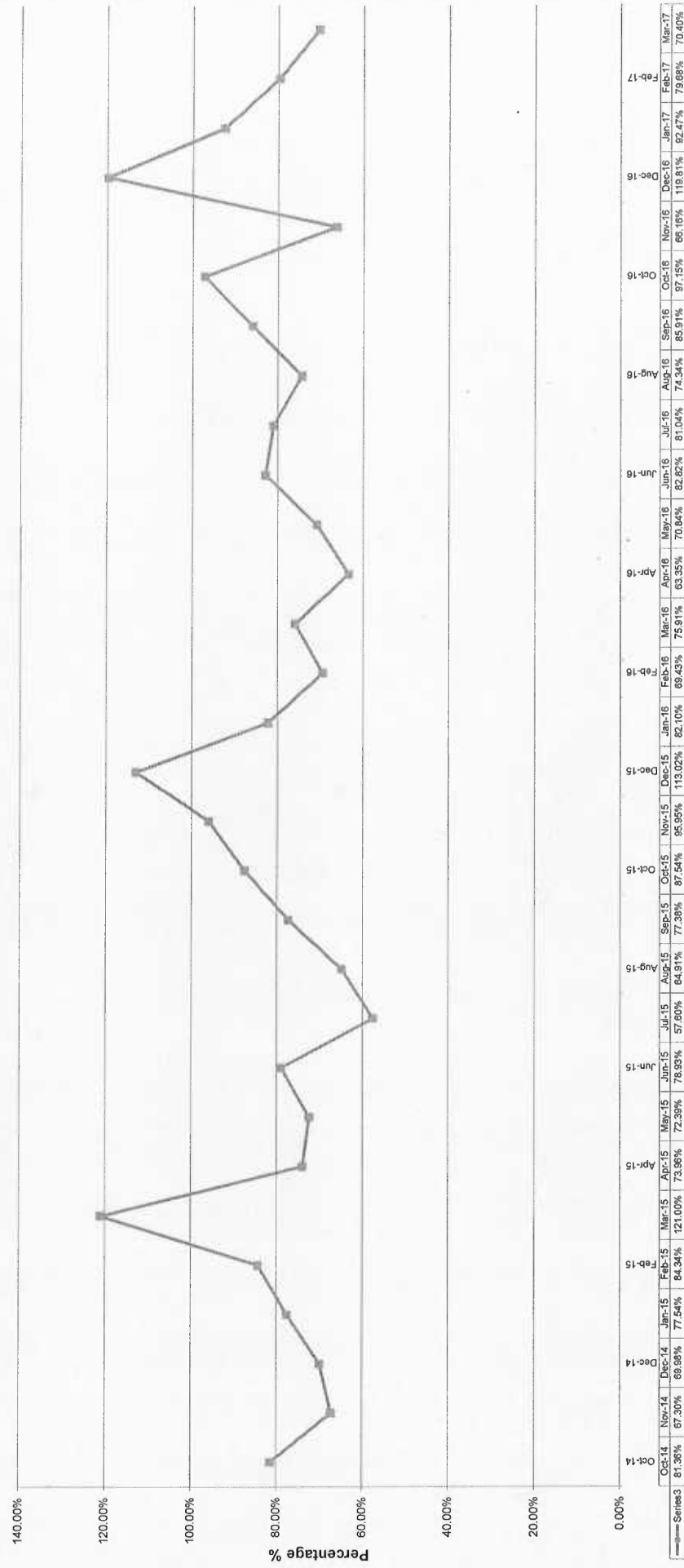




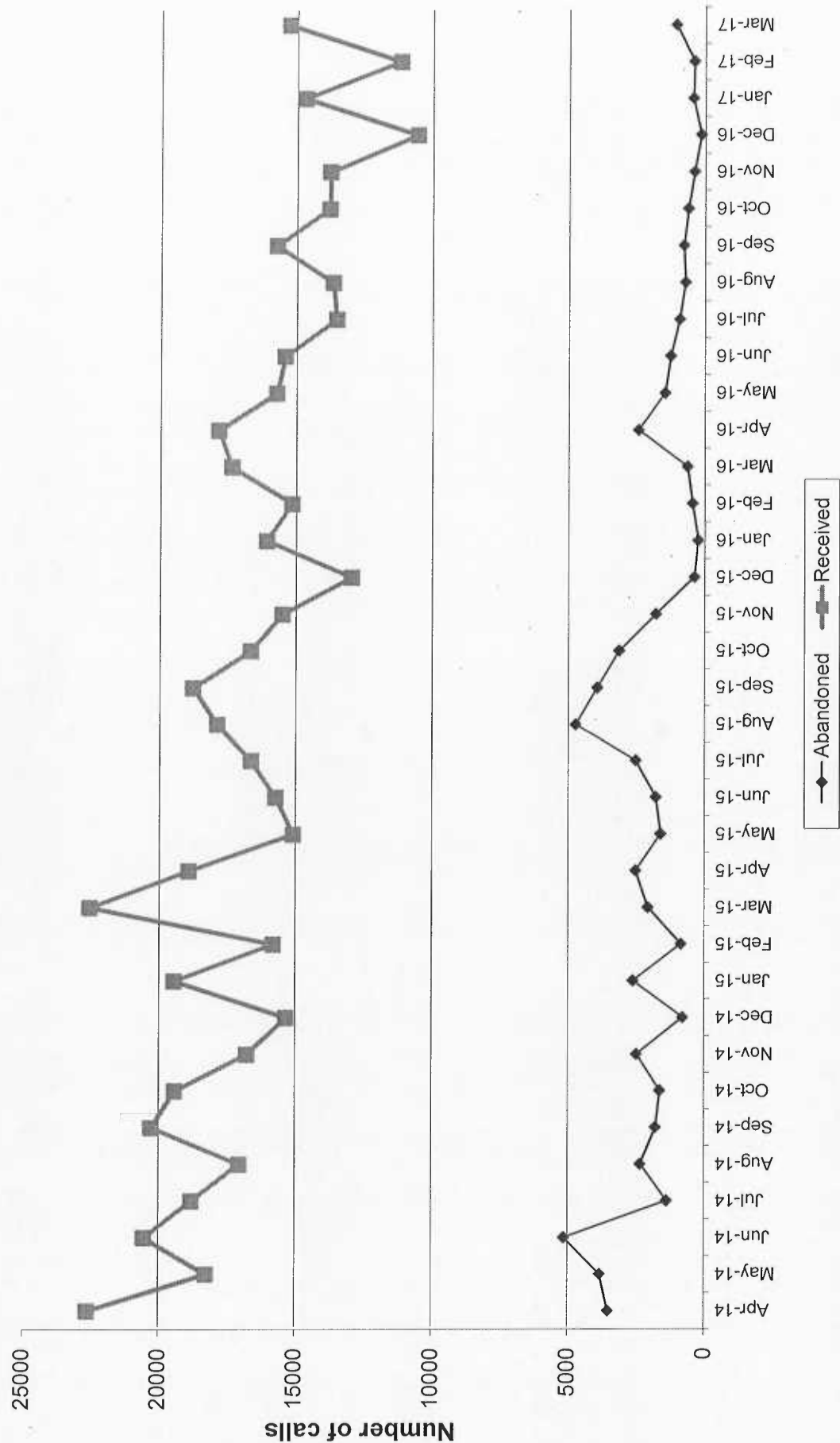
## Housing and Council Tax Support - Stage 2 Complaints from April 2014



Monthly Overpayment % recovered against that created From October 2014 every 2 months



Calls Received and Abandoned by Month from April 2014



Caseload from October 2014 every 2 months

