

Performance in the Housing Department in the first six months of the financial year has been positive, building on the improved performance of recent years. In 2002/3 almost all of the performance indicators met the target set at the beginning of the year, and we have seen continued progress in 2003/4.

## **Key Achievements**

Below are the key performance areas the Southwark Housing has achieved in the first half of the year:

- Successful in receiving 'fit for purpose' for our Housing Strategy by the Government Office for London – one of only 25 received nationally.
- Recognised for our excellent rent arrears practices in the Audit Commission's 'National Report on local authority housing rent income'.
- SASBU recognised for its excellent work by the Government's Anti Social Behaviour Unit and has been granted the largest number of interim ASBO's in the UK in one application.
- Made significant progress towards the Government's target for eliminating the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and is extremely confident of meeting national target of eliminating by March 2004.
- Submitted our Homeless Strategy which places the emphasis on preventing homelessness and providing a range of housing options to those in housing need.
- Agreed a new Private Housing Renewal Strategy.
- Won the London Tourist Initiative Award for work in the Bellenden Renewal' Area.
- Shortlisted for the UK Housing Awards in the 'Good Practice in Promoting Diversity' category for its work in recruiting, training and empowering community facilitators, in conjunction with the Corporate Consultation Unit.

## **Inspection**

The Housing Management service was inspected earlier this year by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate and the report produced in July, stated the service was 1 \* (fair) with 'promising prospects for improvement.' This builds upon a similar inspection on our repairs and maintenance service in 2002 which rated our service again as 1\*(fair) with 'promising prospects for improvement.'

The service was considered 'fair' because of a number of areas, such as :

- a range of customer focussed services have been developed
- annual gas servicing at tenants homes is very well managed
- there are effective procedures in place for rent collection and arrears management

The report also identified some areas where improvements are needed, such as :

- telephone responses in some neighbourhood housing offices are poor
- standards in customer services are inconsistent
- void performance varies markedly by neighbourhood

The service was considered to have 'promising prospects for improvement' because :

- senior housing managers and councillors have a strong commitment to improving housing services
- there has been some success in tackling weak areas of performance, most notably rent collection and the delivery of the housing benefit contract, reflected in improving performance on key indicators
- there are clear plans to address areas of weakness, notably leasehold management and tenant participation

However, the inspection report added a note of caution on 3 areas :

- key aspects of the improvement plan need to be worked up in more detail
- there needs to be increased ownership of proposed organisational changes among staff, residents and other stakeholders
- a stock options appraisal project needs to be progressed as a priority to ensure the Decent Homes Target is met

The inspection report also summarised the Best Value Review as having 'reflected a professional, well managed approach, with a clear commitment to learning from good practice elsewhere'. However they noted there was 'a lack of consistency and thoroughness in the application of the competition element and some elements of service were not explored in sufficient depth'.

The inspection report concluded the improvement plans reflected the issues raised in the Best Value Review and outlined officer accountability, targets and addressed the majority of issues raised in the previous report (Repairs and Maintenance, Aug 2002). The report found there had been a growing emphasis on performance management within the service and there had been some success in tackling weak performance.

The report is being used to improve our performance in key indicators and criticisms have been used to assist in the shaping of our improvement planning process.

## Improvement Plans

The Department has a range of improvement plans which monitor performance against individual improvements. We have also integrated our improvement planning process to create more cohesive, focussed and ambitious service planning documents.

The individual plans show significant progress against many of our individual targets within our plans. Overall, we have achieved a success rate of **84%** of our targets either being on schedule to be achieved or actually achieved after the first six months of the year. That means we have achieved or are on target to achieve **242 different improvements** to the services we offer to our residents.

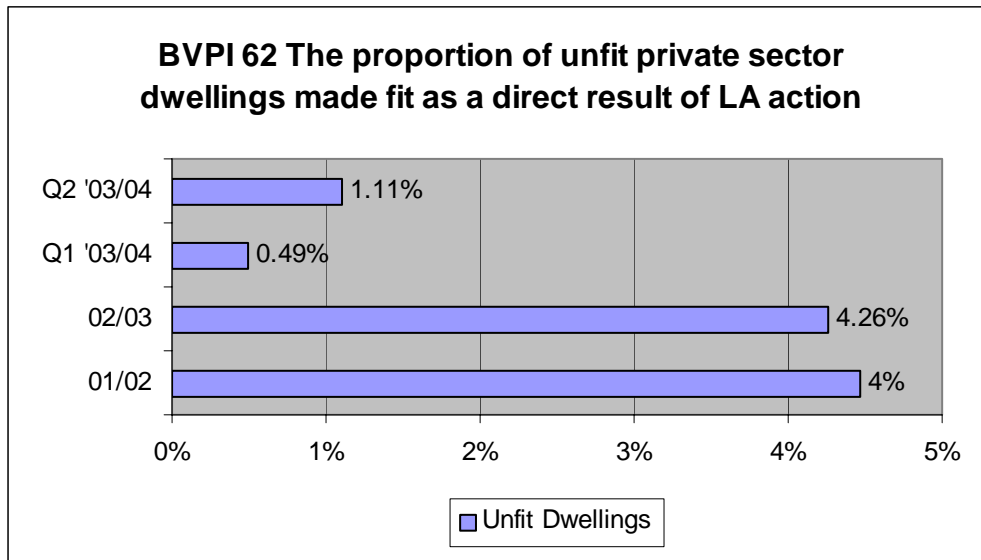
In particular, we are on target to achieve 100% of the actions arising out of the inspection of the housing management service, earlier this year, with good progress being made in all the service areas.

Improvement plan	Achieved & on target actions	Not achieved actions	Deferred actions
Income	14 (67%)	1 (5%)	6 (29%)
Repairs	24 (58%)	9 (22%)	8 (20%)
Cust focus	22 (88%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)
Leasehold	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Environmental Mgt	26 (86%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)
Anti social behaviour	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
HM Inspection	19 (100%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)
Community Housing Services Action Plan	109 (89%)	2 (2%)	11 (9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>242 (84%)</b>	<b>17 (6%)</b>	<b>28 (10%)</b>

Key improvements to services in the second half of the year, most notably the Repairs Call Centre should continue deliver significant progress in improving our services.

## **Performance Indicators**

Below are a selection of our key performance indicators, which show continued improved performance throughout the year.



Target 2003/4 : 4.75%

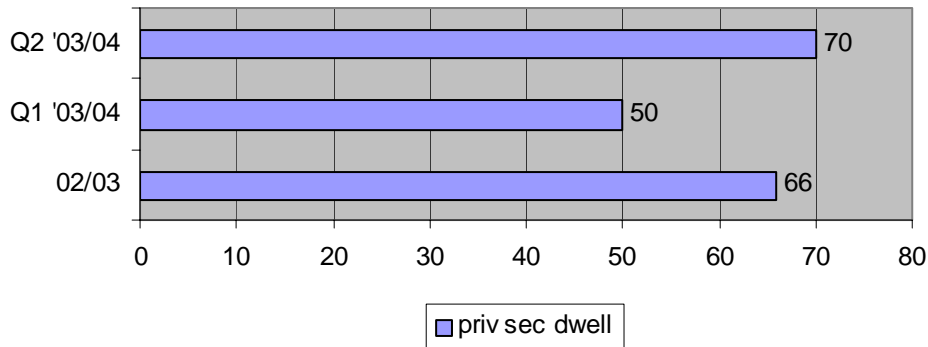
Performance to date : 1.11%

Performance in this indicator is below target at this stage of the year, although the target is an annual target based on the judgement over a 12 month period and there is not always proportionate output throughout the year. There has also been a need to respond to the legislative changes (Regulatory Reform Act), however we are confident there will be positive developments in the second two quarters of the financial year.

The target set was challenging as Southwark Housing has always been a top quartile performer in this service area in the past.

A new strategy for Private Sector Housing was agreed in July 2003 and this will improve performance in this indicator.

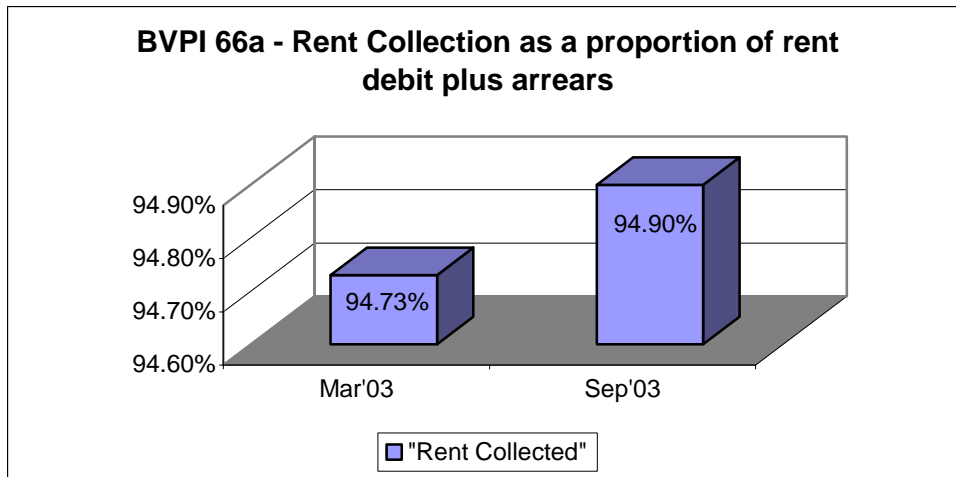
**BVPI 64 Private sector dwellings returned to occupancy or demolished as a direct result of LA action**



Target 2003/04 : 70 dwellings  
Performance to date : 70 dwellings

This indicator shows we have exceeded our performance of 2002/3 in the first six months of 2003/4. The increase in rents for Private Sector Leasing has encouraged landlords to take up this option along with 2 partnership schemes with 2 Registered Social Landlords and a rent deposit scheme.

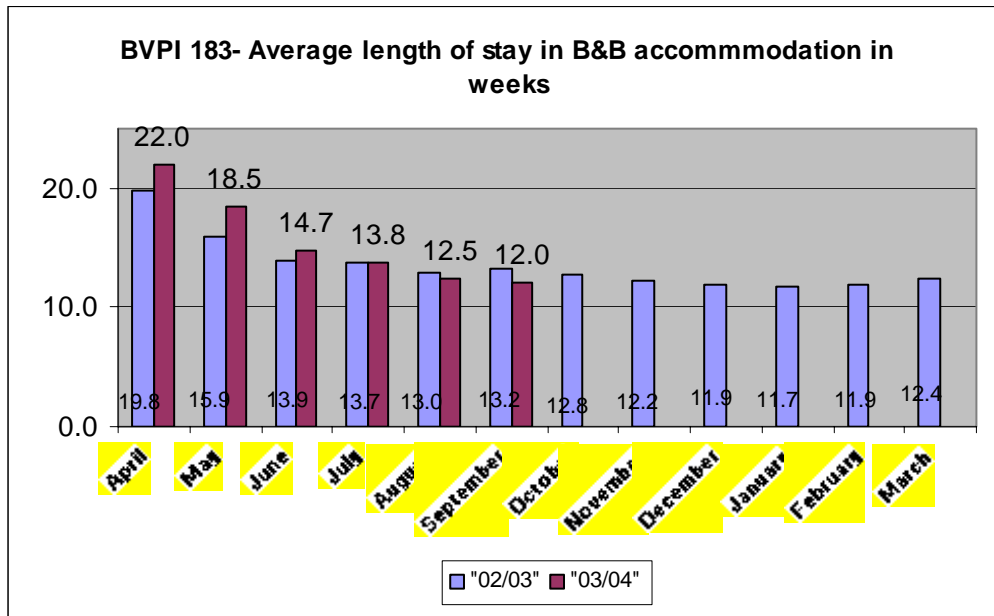
Previous audited data shows Southwark to be in the top quartile of performance in London for this indicator.



Target 2003/04 : 95.5%  
 Performance to date: 94.93%

Performance in the collection of rent shows an improvement on the outturn figure for 2002/03 (94.7%). Successful rent campaign and additional work put in through the summer has improved performance against this challenging target. Experience in previous years has shown improved performance in quarter's 3 & 4 of the financial, which we predict to occur this year.

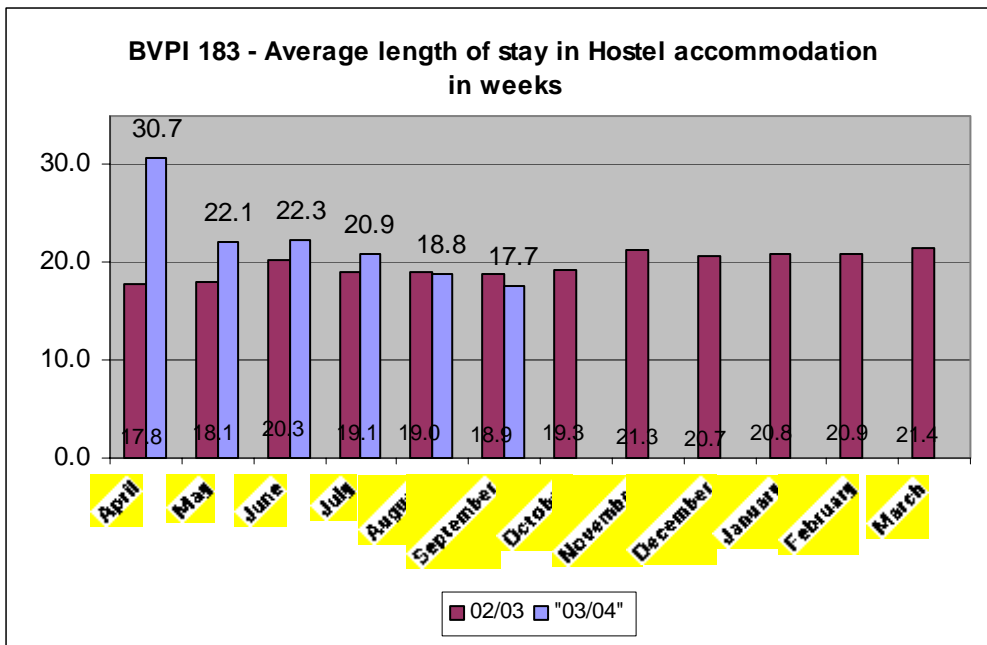
This indicator has shown significant improvement over the past years, from bottom quartile performance to average performance in London.



Target 2003/04 : 12 weeks  
 Performance to date : 12 weeks

Improvements in casework decisions and the temporary accommodation procurement strategy have show continued improvement throughout this year. Performance to date shows we have met the target through speedier transfers into settled temporary accommodation, and we expect to improve on this throughout the second half of the year.

Benchmarking work indicates we are in the top quartile for performance in London for this Performance Indicator.

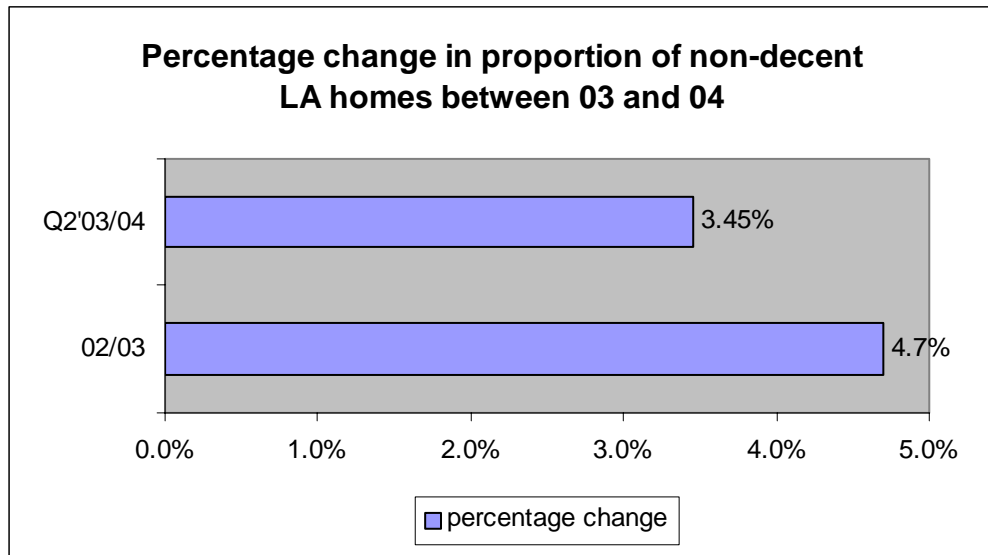


Target 2003/04 : 21 weeks  
 Performance to date : 17.7 weeks

Performance in this area continues to improve through this year, and we are already ahead of the target set. Continued improved performance is expected in the second half of the year.

Benchmarking work indicates we are in the top quartile for performance in London for this Performance Indicator.



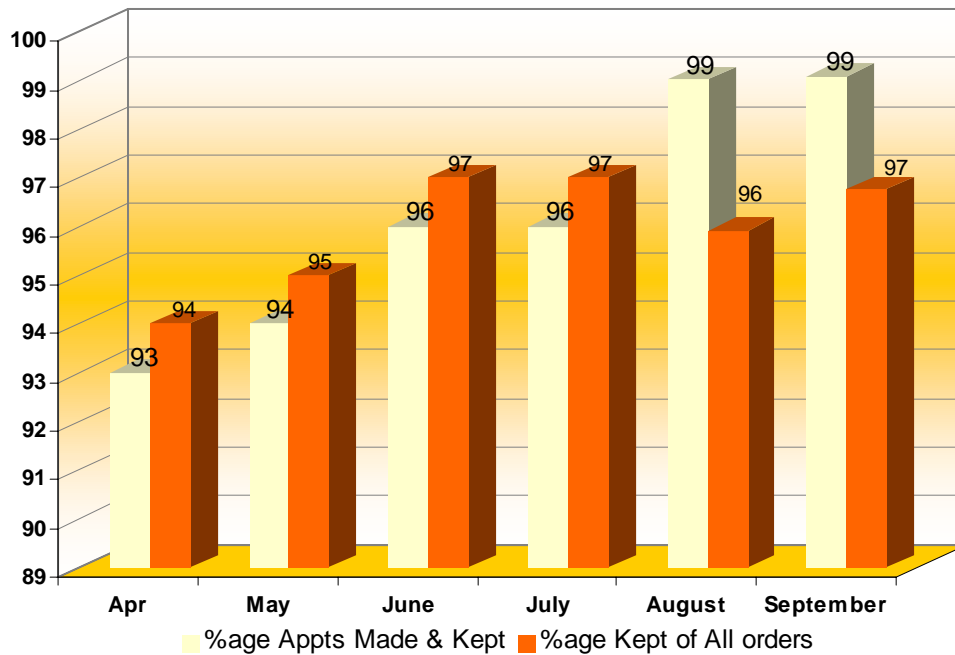


Target 2003/04 : 8.86%  
 Performance to date : 3.45%

We are slightly behind schedule in achieving our decent homes target for this year, but will significantly improve upon the outturn in 2002/3. Demolition of non decent homes in Elmington estate and Coopers road estate will reduce the level of non decency, as will right to buy sales and increased investment in void properties. Work from our investment programme will complement the achievement of this target.

The new stock condition survey which has been carried out this year will shortly feed in to this target and is likely to result in revisions based on the updated information.

**BVPI 185 %age of responsive repairs for which the Authority both Made and Kept an appointment**

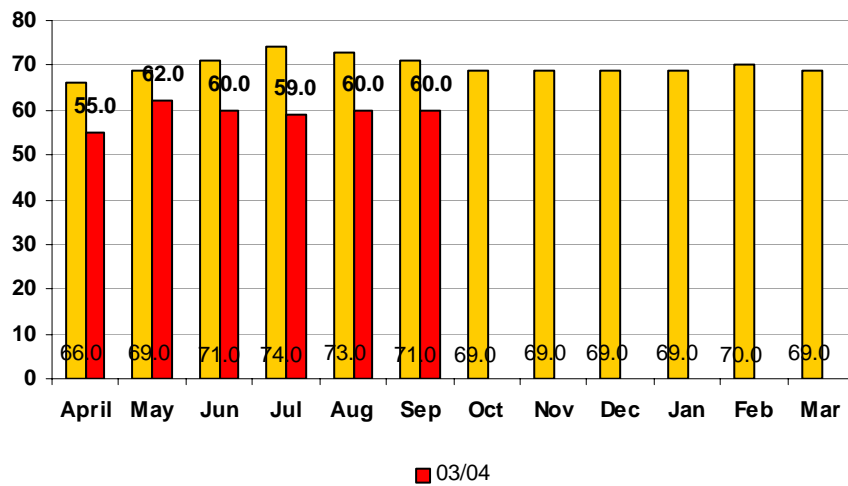


Target 2003/04 : 98.5%  
Performance to date : 99%

Initially the number of appointments for repairs began slowly, although performance has improved and is now ahead of target for the year.

Benchmarking work indicates we are in the top quartile for performance in London for this Performance Indicator and we have been contacted by other London local authorities to share our good practice.

## Void Turnaroud - For all voids under £10,000

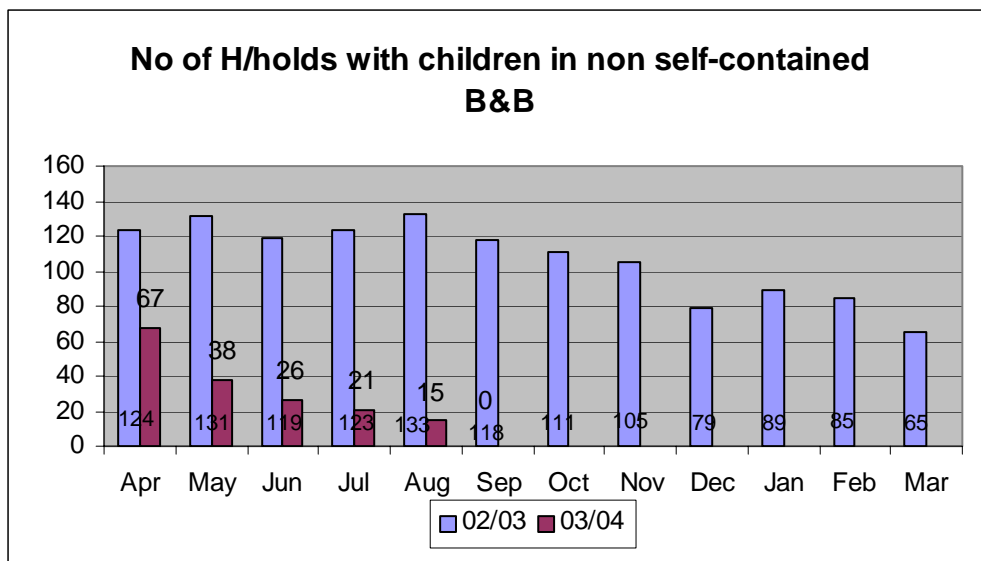


Target 2003/04 : 56 days  
Performance to date : 60 days

Performance on this indicator has improved upon last year's outturn and is on track to meet the target set. Work on improving the streamlining the processes in managing empty properties has assisted with improved performance.

Although recent months outturn performance has plateaued, the indications from the properties that are now empty, indicate we are on schedule to improve performance in quarters 3 & 4.

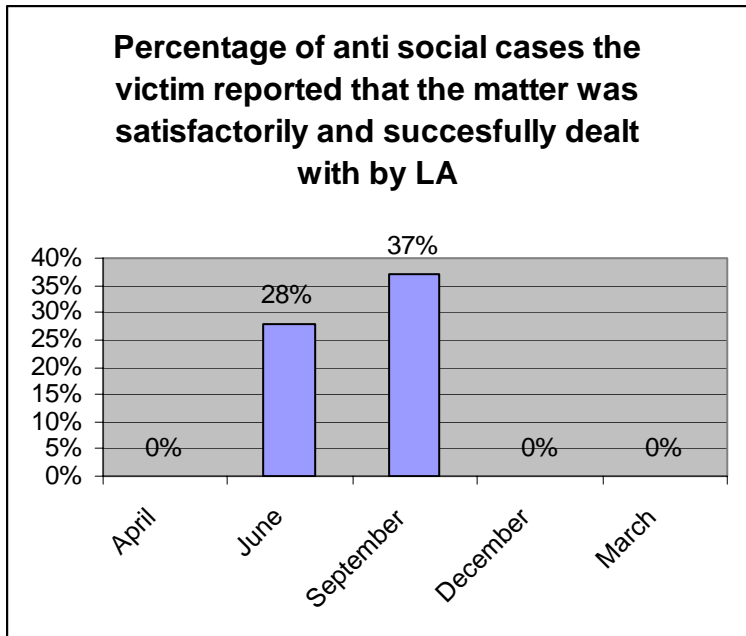
This indicator is a local indicator which has been developed in the later part of 2002/3, and has been brought in for the first year's monitoring in this year.



Target 2003/04 : 0

Performance to date : 0

This performance indicator is the key target from the Government's Bed & Breakfast Unit and they have stressed the importance of meeting this target by the end of the year. As can be seen from the performance in the first two quarters, we have already achieved the target well ahead of schedule. The excellent progress that has been made will continue and we will still have no families in non self contained bed and breakfast accommodation by the end of the year.

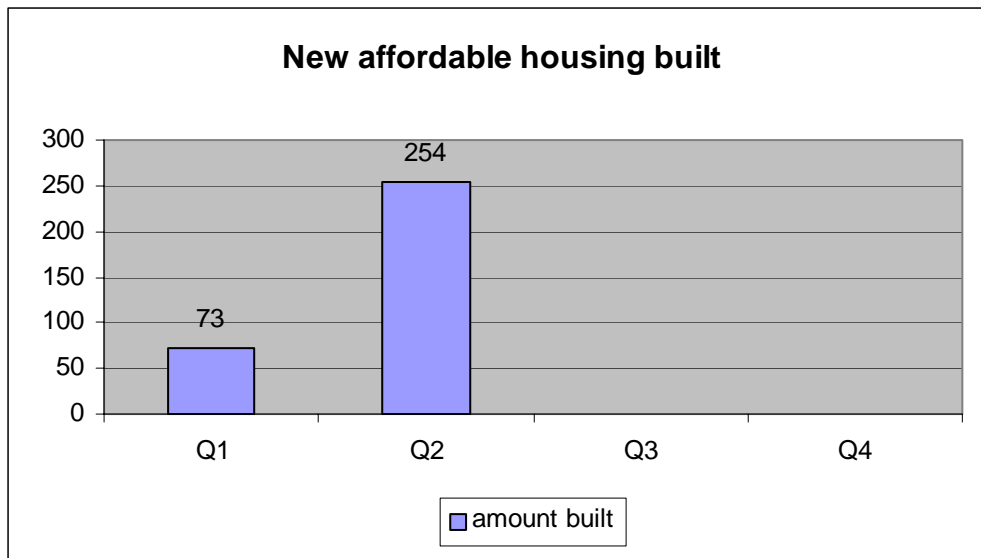


Target 2003/04 : 62%  
 Performance to date : 37%

This is a new indicator, which Housing have developed to measure the effectiveness of our anti social behaviour strategy. This is the first time we will have monitored progress throughout the year, although we do have some benchmark data from 2002/3.

We are ahead of schedule dealing with anti-social behaviour to the satisfaction of the victims. Performance in this area is dependant on the volume of referrals, but we expect our initiatives such as introductory tenancies to support our work.

We fully expect to meet and exceed the target set at the start of the year.



Target 2003/04 : 400 units

Performance to date : 254 units

This is an annual target, which is dependent on schemes becoming live at different points in the year.

The completion of schemes in Linden Grove, Elmington and in Peckham have enabled us to be ahead of schedule at the half way mark in the year. There are further schemes in the pipeline in the borough, such as Grove Vale, which will ensure we will meet the target.