



The Gateshead Housing Company Resources Committee

Tuesday 10 September 2013 at 10am
Board Room 2, The Gateshead Housing Company, Keelman
House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley
Trading Estate, Gateshead NE11 0XA

Agenda

Item	Business
1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Declarations of Interest
	<u>ITEM FOR DECISION</u>
3.	Minutes (Pages 3-6) To approve as a correct the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 7 May 2013
4.	Matters Arising
	<u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>
5.	Management Accounts – First Quarter 2013/14 (Pages 7-21) Report of Head of Finance
6.	Sickness Absence and Human Resources Update (Pages 22-35) Report of Support Services Manager
7.	Health and Safety Update (Pages 36-41) Report of Support Services Manager

Contact: Stuart Gibson Tel: (0191) 433 5308 Date: 5 September 2013

Item	Business
8.	Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2012/13 (Pages 42-60) Report of Managing Director
9.	Items for Future Agendas
10.	Date and Time of Next Meeting Tuesday 5 November 2013 at 2pm in Board Room 2
11.	Exclusion of the Press and Public The committee may wish to consider excluding the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with categories 1 and 5 of the company's Access to Information Rules.



The Gateshead Housing Company

Working with Gateshead Council

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7 May 2013

PRESENT:

Directors

John Hamilton (Chair)
Mick Davison
Robert Buckley
George Clark
Paul Foy

Advisers

Jon Mallen-Beadle	Managing Director
Phil Gallagher	Head of Investments & Development
Natalie Hewitt	Head of Corporate Services
Debbie Worrall	HR Advisor

Apologies

Kathryn Ferdinand

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were declared.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of Resources Committee held on 14 February 2013 approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment made to page 5

“High Rise Blocks (above 5 storey)” was changed to “High Rise Blocks (5 storey and above)”

3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – FOURTH QUARTER 2012/13

The committee received an update on the management accounts for the fourth quarter 2012/13 including the income and expenditure in relation to both revenue and repairs.

The Council initially agreed to pay the company fees totalling £31.429m for the 2012/13 financial year, consisting of £13.334m for the management fee and £18.095m for the repairs fee. As detailed in the budget report, the proposed budget initially provided a deficit of £609,000 however, following a review of current vacancies and by including some of these in the budget at zero cost we reduced the deficit to £9,000.

The accounts at the end of the fourth quarter 2012/13 show an under spend for the year of £18,000. This is due to salary costs being under spent in some sections where posts have been vacant and not yet filled. The repairs account is under spent for the year by £10,000.

Members raised concerns about the increase in the level of insurance claims and it was agreed to provide more detailed information.

The audit of the Financial Statements will take place at the end of May and beginning of June and the finalised Financial Statements will be brought to the Audit Committee meeting in July for approval.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the management accounts for the fourth quarter of the 2012/13 financial year be noted and a more detailed analysis of insurance claims be circulated.
- (ii) That the committee place on record their thanks for the hard work in producing the excellent outturn for the financial year.

4 SICKNESS ABSENCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

The committee received an update on general HR initiatives and developments for the period April 2012 to March 2013.

The total sickness absence for the period equates to 7.67 days per person compared to 8.30 days last year which is a reduction of 7.6%.

Short term absence for the period was 3.34 days per person and long term absence was 4.34 days. This compares with 4.71 days short term absence and 3.60 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents a reduction of 29.1% in short term absence. Long term absence has however increased by 17%.

The biggest cause of absence has continued to be stress with 918 days lost compared to 698 last year. It is a concern that the figure has increased by 24%. Of the 918 days of stress related illness, 79% was related to stress in an employee's personal life and 21% was work related. Initiatives that have taken place and measure in place to address this were reported. The company will continue to investigate initiatives that will help it better understand the causes of depression, anxiety and stress, specifically around the impact linked to welfare reform and the current economic climate.

The company has held 44 short term sickness absence review meetings in the period, which resulted in 18 employees being issued with first written cautions.

The company has held 13 long term sickness absence reviews in the period triggered in a response to four or more continuous weeks of absence. The absence management review for long term absence considers an employees health and their future employability with the company.

Nine employees attended an occupational health physician's appointment as a result of absence review meetings.

73 cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)/counselling sessions were supported by the company.

One employee attended physiotherapy sessions supported by the company.

58 employees were referred to occupational health for an initial assessment. 43 employees attended an occupational health review.

Sixteen employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period April 2012 to March 2013.

Details of investigation/disciplinary, grievances, bullying and harassment and Whistleblowing during the period were reported.

The company has advertised 22 jobs during the period.

Details of learning and development activity in the period were reported. These included training in mediation, business continuity planning, data protection e-learning, assessments, qualifications, health and safety and ICT.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and a more detailed report be produced on the impact of stress in employee's personal life.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The committee received a summary of equality and diversity work with the organisation for the fourth quarter of the year.

During the period, the company has been working with Mears in reviewing and developing its approach to Asbestos Management.

The revised approach to accidents reporting procedures was implemented during this reporting period. Details of accidents/incidents reported during the quarter were reported.

During the period request were received for asbestos surveys to support a number of areas of work. There were four incidents relating to the accidental disturbance of Asbestos Containing Material.

During the last quarter the SHE Section and Tyne and Wear Fire Service have jointly visited several sheltered housing units to carry out the periodical fire safety audits. A work programme has been developed for the sheltered housing buildings and is due to start in the next reporting period and be completed by April 2014.

The periodical monitoring meetings with Gateshead Council's Local Environmental Services and the company has been re-established.

Through the insurance inspection of lifts there were no relevant actions reported during the period. There were seven entrapments reported. In only one incident the response exceeded the prescribed time and the findings have

been discussed with the lift company and procedures amended to prevent this reoccurrence.

When a construction project commences the Company is required to notify the HSE using an F10. There are presently 17 F10 notifications in place. There are 15 sites started and works are progressing. All working sites have been visited and were found to be working to agreed site rules and regulations.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY – UPDATE

The committee received a summary of equality and diversity work within the organisation for the last quarter of 2012/13 which support its overall goals.

In March 2013, 38 attendees took part in an event called 'Equality and Diversity: It Pays to Know'. This was a joint event between the housing company and Assessment North East, a local organisation specialising in equality and diversity.

During this reporting period, the Involvement and Diversity Manager attended an E&D 'Train the Trainer' session, aimed at providing officers with information and advice to deliver training and awareness on equality issues within individual organisations.

As a result, this method will be used to deliver the customer equality session 'Understanding Differences in People' delivering a cost saving, whilst also providing the opportunity to tailor this training to make it much more directly related to the housing company and the community it serves.

The company continues to collect and update the information held on its customers to ensure it responds appropriately to individual needs such as communicating in the most appropriate way to them.

The Committee received further updates on the company's Community Fund, and progress being made on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index action plan

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

7 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday 10 September 2013 at 10am in Board Room 2, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead.

8 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated categories of the Company's Access to Information Rules.



Report to Resources Committee

10 September 2013

Title: Management Accounts – First Quarter 2013/14

Report of: Head of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Committee with an update on the management accounts for the first quarter of the financial year 2013/14.

Background

2. The Accounts Team produces monthly management accounts which detail the actual charges for the month, the year to date charges and the budget year to date. This shows the variance and the forecasted budget. This report has been included in the Appendix to this report.
3. The Board agreed the budget for 2013/14 at its meeting on 21 March 2013.

Management Accounts

4. The Council agreed to pay the company fees totalling £33.61m for the 2013/14 financial year. This consists of £12.833m for the Management Fee and £19.127m for the Repairs Fee, £1m for the Company to manage the capital programme and a Rent and Performance fee expected at £650k.
5. The Company has also budgeted to receive £113k in income in 2013/14 in relation to rent at Keelman House, management fees for managing other properties and additional fees for welfare reform advisors.
6. The total revenue budget for 2013/14 is therefore £14.596m and the repairs budget £19.127m.
7. As detailed in the budget report, the proposed budget, similar to the prior year, includes a review of current vacancies and by including some of these in the budget at zero cost we have set a budget deficit of £4,622. We would expect to bring this deficit back in line during the year.
8. The 2013/14 repairs fee has been agreed as a decrease on the 2012/13 fee to reflect the 3% savings proposed in the Mears tendered price as a result of efficiencies.

9. The Management Accounts for the first quarter of the financial year 2013/14 are included within the Appendix to this report. The Management Accounts include the income and expenditure in relation to both revenue and repairs up to the end of June 2013.
10. The Management Accounts Revenue shows an underspend for the year of £22,000. This is mainly due to slippage on salary costs where posts have not yet been filled in some services due to restructures currently taking place.
11. The Management Accounts Repairs is underspent based on forecasted budget to date, however, we are projecting that the full budget will be spent by the year end. Income is matched against expenditure in repairs, so no underspend is shown. The current underspend against forecast is mainly due to timing differences in repairs invoices being received and processed due to the interface between computer systems.
12. There has, however, been a significant increase in the number of orders raised for work to vacant properties in the first quarter this year (488) compared to the same period last year (325). A contributing factor to this additional workload is an increase in tenancy terminations as a result of welfare reform changes. We have not yet received all of the void invoices but there is the potential for the budget to overspend in year if this increase continues. Discussions have been held with the Council around how any over spend will be funded and void expenditure is being closely monitored.

Link to values

13. This report is in line with the following values of the company :-
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being motivated trained, and committed across the company

Impact on tenants

14. Appropriate financial monitoring and control will ensure efficiencies are maximised and redirected to services that directly impact on tenants.

Risk Management Implications

15. Regular and accurate monitoring will ensure that the strategic risk within the business plan (insufficient available financial resources) is effectively controlled.
16. Current and proposed changes as part of Welfare Reform have impacted on void expenditure and will need to be closely monitored throughout the year to ensure any potential overspends are mitigated.

Financial Implications

17. The financial implications are contained within the report and appendices.

Health Implications

18. There are no direct health implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

19. There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report.

Value for Money implications

20. Regular financial monitoring and control will ensure efficiencies are maximised and then utilised in the most appropriate manner.

Environmental Implications

21. Environmental consideration is given during the day to day management of financial resources through the drive to ensure that purchasing methods are sustainable and through the reduction of energy costs through energy efficient measures being introduced in working practices.

Consultation carried out

22. None directly for this report.

Recommendation

23. The committee's views are sought as to whether it is satisfied with the financial management of the Revenue and Repairs budgets for the first quarter of the 2013/14 financial year.

**The Gateshead Housing Company
Management Accounts – June 2013**

Revenue and Repairs Executive Summary

1. The management accounts for the first quarter of the 2013/14 financial year are shown below:

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
Management Fee				
Income	3,648	3,649	(1)	14,596
Employee Costs	2,328	2,345	17	9,381
Overhead Costs	1,298	1,304	6	5,215
Surplus/(Deficit)	22	0	22	0
Repairs Fee				
Repairs Management Fee	4,380	4,785	(405)	19,127
Repairs Costs	4,380	4,785	405	19,127
Surplus/(Deficit)	0	0	0	0
Overall Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	22	0	22	0

2. Overall, the first quarter position shows an underspend of £22,000. The under spend is mainly due to slippage on salary costs where posts have not yet been filled in some services due to restructures currently taking place.
3. Repairs is under spent for the year by £405,000, however, the income is matched against expenditure in repairs and so no under spend is shown. Repairs are projected to spend to full budget by the year end.

Income

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
INCOME				
Management Fee	3,208	3,208	0	12,833
Officer Costs	250	250	0	1,000
Management Fee from external bodies	5	5	0	21
Gardening Service Income	0	0	0	2
Rent	9	9	0	38
Performance Fee	163	163	0	650
Welfare Reform Officers	12	13	(1)	52
Total Income	3,647	3,648	(1)	14,596

4. Overall income for the first quarter is under target by £1,000 but is expected to come in on target for the year. The Management Fee is in relation to the everyday management of Gateshead Council's properties. This was calculated based on the previous year's fee less an efficiency target of 1.41% savings.
5. The Officer Costs are for the work carried out in relation to managing the capital programme on behalf of the Council. This fee covers the staffing and overheads required to manage the programme. This fee equates to 5% of the overall capital programme.
6. The Management Fee from external bodies relates to the fee received by the company for undertaking the day-to-day management of properties on behalf of the company's subsidiary Keelman Homes and another local housing provider.
7. Gardening service income is an additional income amount agreed with Gateshead Council's Housing Options section. This income is received for the use of the Handyperson service to undertake grass cutting and other gardening services for the homeless section properties.
8. Rent relates to £38k rent received for the section of Keelman House that has been sub-leased.
9. The Performance Fee is in relation to the work that the rent and income teams undertake in the collection of rent and service charges. We have reached an agreement with the Council that if the rent and income teams collect rent and service charges over and above the national collection rate target we have a profit sharing arrangement where we receive 50% of the income collected over and above this target. This is paid annually in arrears and this is the fee due for collection rates in 2012/13.
10. The Welfare Reform Officer income is funding we have received to employ 2 Advice and Support Officers to assist tenants who will be affected by welfare reform changes. The 2 officers started in post in February 2013 and the income is to pay for their salary costs incurred this year. This income is slightly under

budget at the end of quarter 1 as the salary costs incurred by the 2 Advice and Support Officers have been slightly less than budgeted for.

Staff Costs

11. Staff Costs are broken down as follows:

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
Employee Costs				
Customer Services	775	780	5	3,120
Neighbourhood Services - HQ	255	256	1	1,023
Investment & Development Services	188	190	2	761
Customers and Communities sub total	1,218	1,226	8	4,904
HR, Admin and Health & Safety	120	123	3	490
Finance	300	306	6	1,224
Corporate Services sub total	420	429	9	1,714
Neighbourhood Services - areas	690	690	0	2,763
Total Employee costs	2,328	2,345	17	9,381

12. Salary costs are underspent for the first quarter. The staff budget is based on the current structure but a number of vacant posts have been held at zero budget and therefore, they will not be appointed to during the year. This was to enable budgets to breakeven. As service areas are reviewed, restructures will be brought to this committee for approval to ensure that any vacant posts which are not required are deleted.
13. One of the main areas where staff costs are underspent is in Finance, which relates mainly to vacant posts in the leasehold and performance sections.
14. In addition, there is an underspend on staff costs in the Customer Services section, which is mainly due to the restructure being carried out within the Repairs Section. Vacant posts are being held whilst the restructure and subsequent filling of posts takes place.
15. During the first quarter 2013/14 we have spent £22,000 on agency staff, which remains at the same level as agency spend during the first quarter in 2012/13. The spend on agency staff this year has been partly offset in the month end figures due to a number of vacant posts being held.
16. The agency staff costs relate mainly to work in the Housing Offices to cover long term sick and the older person's team and finance team to cover vacant posts whilst recruitment takes place.

Overhead Costs

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
Overhead Costs				
Customers and Communities HQ Total	63	72	9	286
Corporate Services Total	978	975	(3)	3,902
Customers and Communities Area Costs	257	257	0	1,027
Total Overhead Costs	1,298	1,304	6	5,215

17. Overhead costs are underspent for the first quarter. This is mainly due to costs not yet being incurred. We expect that this budget will break even at the year end.
18. The overspend in Corporate Services is mainly due to the settlement of a couple of larger insurance claims.
19. An analysis of overhead spend against budget is included within Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows a pie chart of areas that the HQ Overheads have been spent on.
20. Budget Holders are accountable for their budgets and receive monthly management accounts. This enables them to review their spend in more detail. The finance section monitor all areas of spend and ensure that costs are controlled effectively. It should be noted that not all costs can be controlled especially in relation to utility costs and insurance claims. Finance monitors these costs on a monthly basis and highlights to the Management Team any areas causing concern. There are no such areas causing concern at this time.

Repairs Summary

21. The repairs budget was set with all Mears budgets reduced by a 3% efficiency saving as agreed in the repairs tender. All other budgets have remained at the same level as 2012/13.
22. An analysis of the repairs costs is provided below.

	Budget £000's	YTD Actual £000's	Variance £000's
REPAIRS			
Fixed Costs (Contractors' Prelim's)	1,159	1,172	(13)
Responsive – Mears	969	1,256	(287)
Responsive – LES	250	194	56
Responsive – Other	200	137	63
Relets – Mears	845	757	88
Relets - Other	175	66	109
Cyclical Repairs – Servicing	125	102	23
Cyclical Repairs – Remedial Works	38	0	38
Water Hygiene Testing	38	15	23
Painting	280	114	166
Gas Servicing	480	468	12
Electrical Circuit Testing	34	23	11
Solid Fuel Testing	1	0	1
Lift Maintenance	34	22	12
Security	50	7	43
Environmental Works	56	13	43
Energy Performance Certificates	13	8	5
Aids & Adaptations	38	26	12
	4,785	4,380	405
Insurance Funded Repairs	0	0	0
Repair Management Fee Income	4,785	4,380	(405)
Income Total	4,785	4,380	(405)
REPAIRS TOTAL	0	0	0

Responsive Repairs

23. Responsive repair costs have been split between spend with Mears, spend with Local Environmental Services and the other costs associated with repairs. Mears are the repairs contractor and they carry out all the repairs and maintenance at properties. LES carry out all drainage and highways repair works. Other costs are in relation to asbestos testing and removal works, batched Mears repair work, the repairs freephone number and postage for any postcards/letters, as well as other sub-contractor costs for works Mears are unable to carry out.

24. Overall, the responsive repair costs are over budget for the first quarter. The overspend with Mears is due to more specialist works being directed through Mears rather than given to other subcontractors. The reduction in other responsive works is due to more works being directed through Mears rather than using other specialist contractors. The under spend with LES is due to works not being invoiced by LES in a timely manner.
25. There have been 15,306 repair orders invoiced in the first quarter and average repair costs for first quarter were £105.41.
26. An analysis of the type of responsive repairs carried out is included within Appendix 3 and a comparison of responsive repairs costs and number of jobs is included in Appendix 4.

Relets

27. The relet budget is split between the costs of the works carried out by Mears and the other costs associated with relets. Other costs relate mainly to costs associated with asbestos works, security costs and decoration vouchers provided to new tenants.
28. Mears relet costs are under budget at the first quarter. However, the number of void properties has increased significantly this year with 428 properties let in the first quarter, compared to 298 for the same period in 2012/13. We have not yet received invoices for all of these jobs but when we do it is likely the void spend will be over budget. The numbers of voids will be closely monitored during the year and discussions have been held with the Council regarding this potential problem if the current trend continues.
29. Weekly operational meetings are held with Mears to discuss the relet works being undertaken and we closely monitor the number of voids sent through to Mears for relet works.
30. The average relet cost for jobs completed and invoiced in the first quarter was £2,660.59 and the number of relets invoiced in the first quarter was 405. The figures for the first quarter of 2012/13 are not comparable due to invoicing issues at the start of the new repairs contract.

Painting

31. The painting programme budget was increased this year by £500,000. The budget is currently under spent by £166,000 in the first quarter as many of the additional schemes that were added to this years plan have been at the planning and preparation stage during the first quarter. We would expect the level of spend to increase during the second quarter as work begins on the additional schemes.

Gas Servicing

32. Gas servicing is under budget for the first quarter. This budget line includes the budget for the Gas Care Plan which is a fixed monthly cost of £147,000, the budget for gas repairs and the no access team, and any warrant required to secure access to a property.

33. Gas appliances are required to have a gas service carried out every 12 months. At the end of the first quarter, 99.97% of properties had a gas service within the previous 12 months. 4 properties were out of date by 1 to 4 weeks and 2 properties were out of date by 4 to 8 weeks.

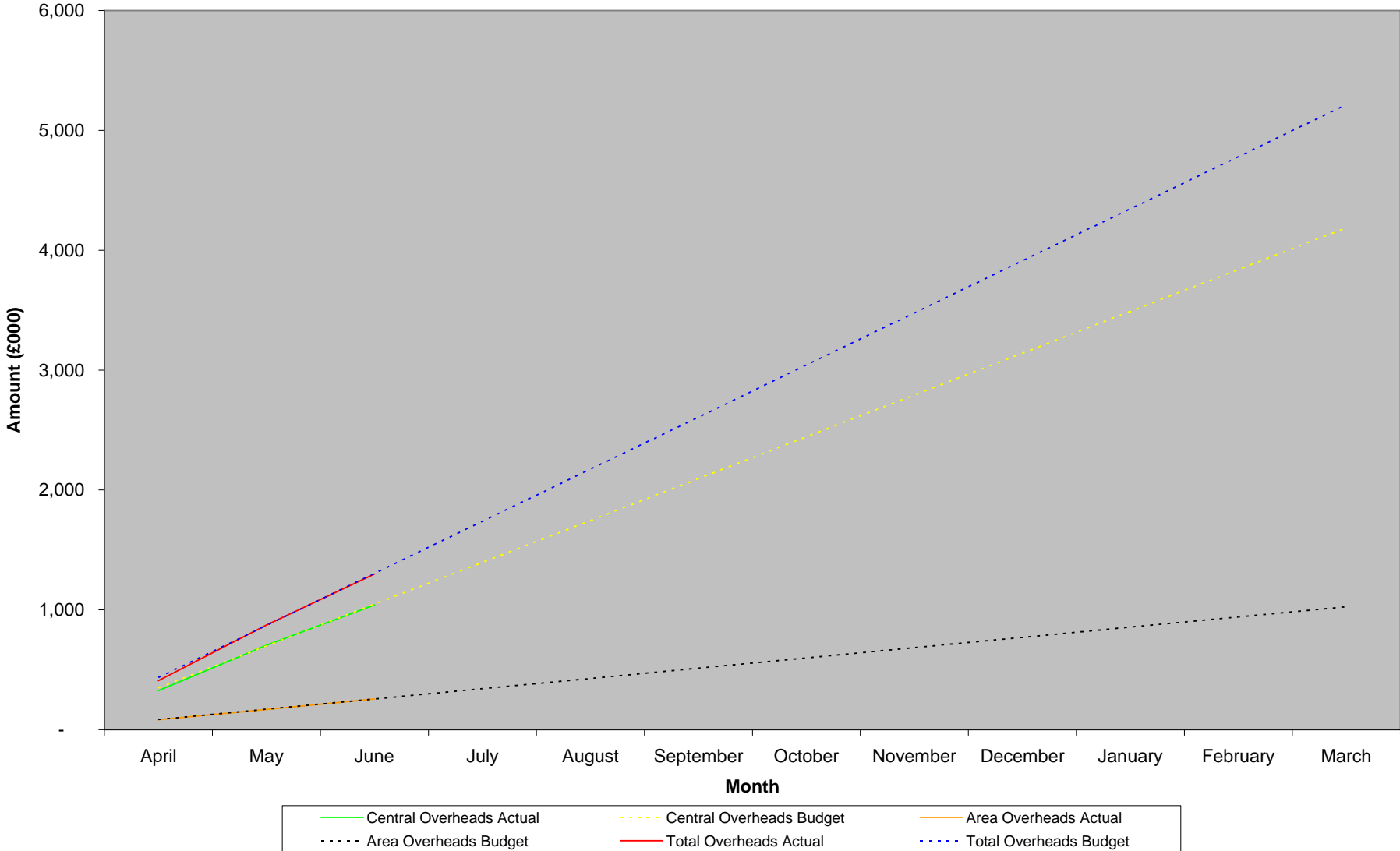
Cyclical Maintenance

34. There are a number of repair costs in relation to the cyclical maintenance programme which has been developed for our properties. This is particularly in relation to cyclical repairs, water hygiene testing, lift maintenance, environmental works, electrical circuit testing and solid fuel testing.
35. We have a programme of works for these areas of maintenance. We have separated out the cyclical works – remedial works, as this is a responsive element of costs, so we can build up our ability to assess the expenditure. There has been no spend required in this area in the first quarter. The security budget is underspent at the first quarter and this is due to a delay in processing invoices. The cyclical repairs servicing budget is also underspent at the first quarter and this is due to delays in receiving invoices from LES.
36. Following the appointment by the Company of a Cyclical Repairs Manager, all areas of cyclical maintenance will be reviewed, including the service level agreements we have in place, during 2013/14.

Detailed Management Accounts

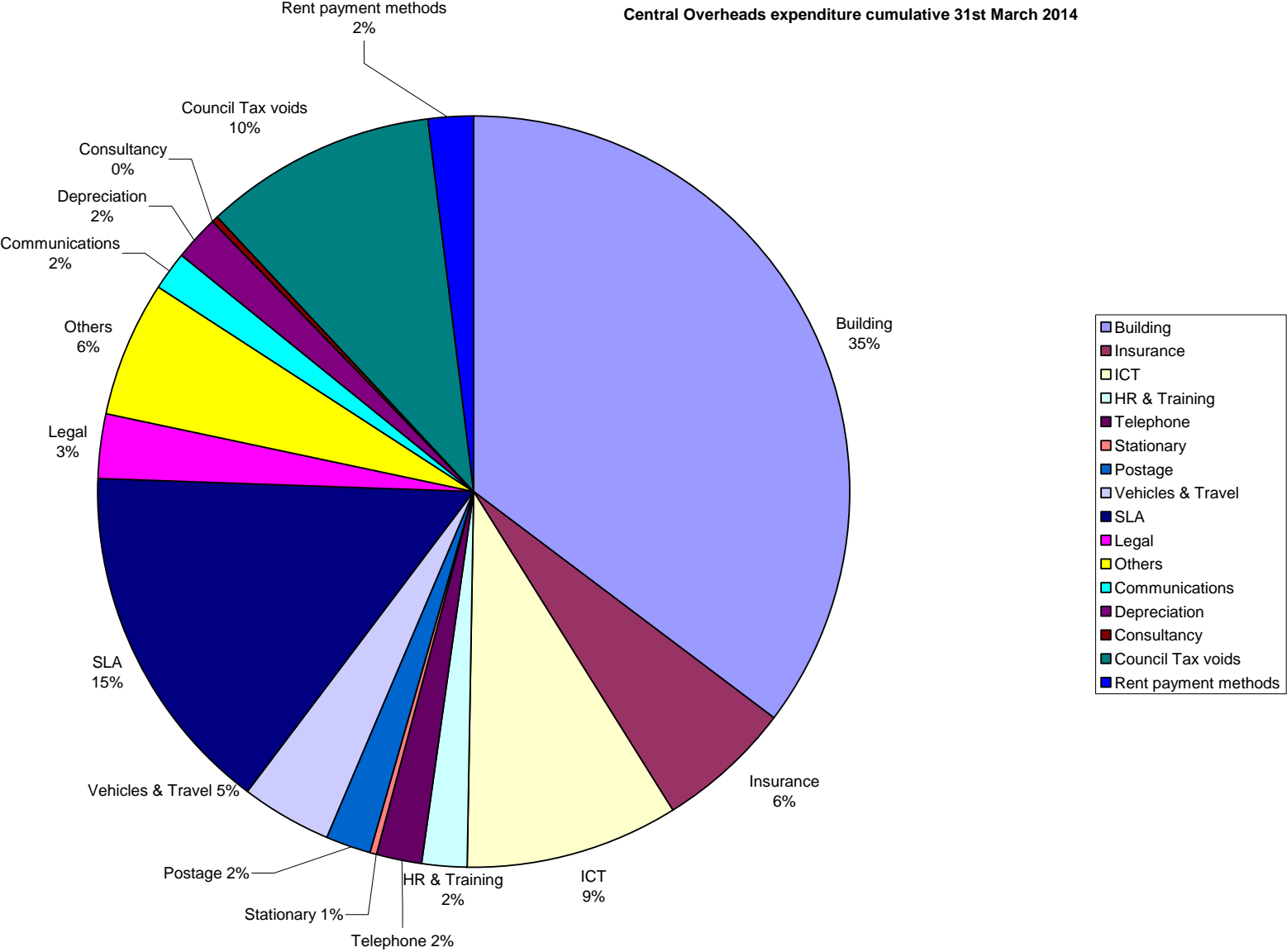
	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
INCOME				
Management Fee	3,208	3,208	0	12,833
Officer Costs	250	250	0	1,000
Management Fee from external bodies	5	5	0	21
Gardening Service Income	0	0	0	2
Rent	9	9	0	38
Performance Fee	163	163	0	650
Welfare Reform Officers	12	13	(1)	52
Total Income	3,647	3,648	(1)	14,596
Employee Costs				
Customer Services	775	780	5	3,120
Neighbourhood Services - HQ	255	256	1	1,023
Investment & Development Services	188	190	2	761
Customers and Communities sub total	1,218	1,226	8	4,904
HR, Admin and Health & Safety	120	123	3	490
Finance	300	306	6	1,224
Corporate Services sub total	420	429	9	1,714
Neighbourhood Services - areas	690	690	0	2,763
Total Employee costs	2,328	2,345	17	9,381
Overhead Costs				
Customers and Communities HQ Total	63	72	9	286
Corporate Services Total	978	975	(3)	3,902
Customers and Communities Area Costs	257	257	0	1,027
Total Overhead Costs	1,298	1,304	6	5,215
Surplus/(Deficit)	22	0	22	0
Repairs Fee				
Repairs Management Fee	4,380	4,785	(405)	19,127
Repairs Costs	4,380	4,785	405	19,127
Surplus/(Deficit)	0	0	0	0
Overall Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	22	0	22	0

TGHC Overheads Budget 2013/14



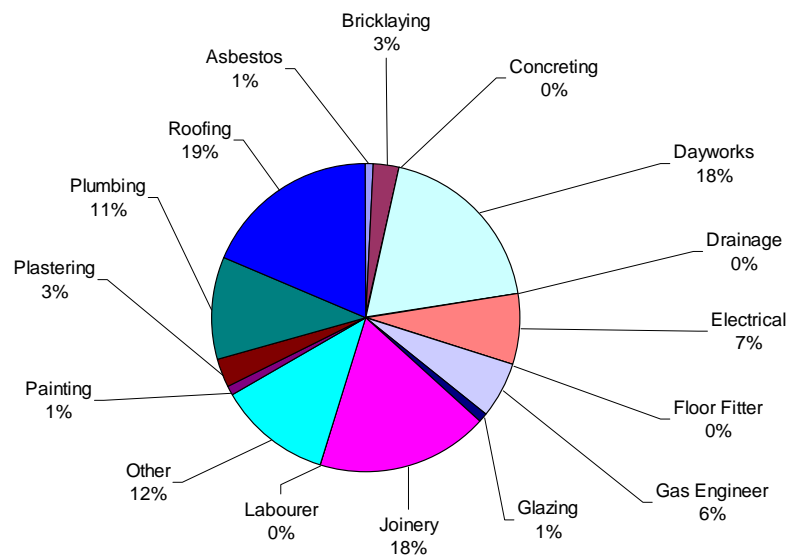
Appendix 2

Central Overheads expenditure cumulative 31st March 2014



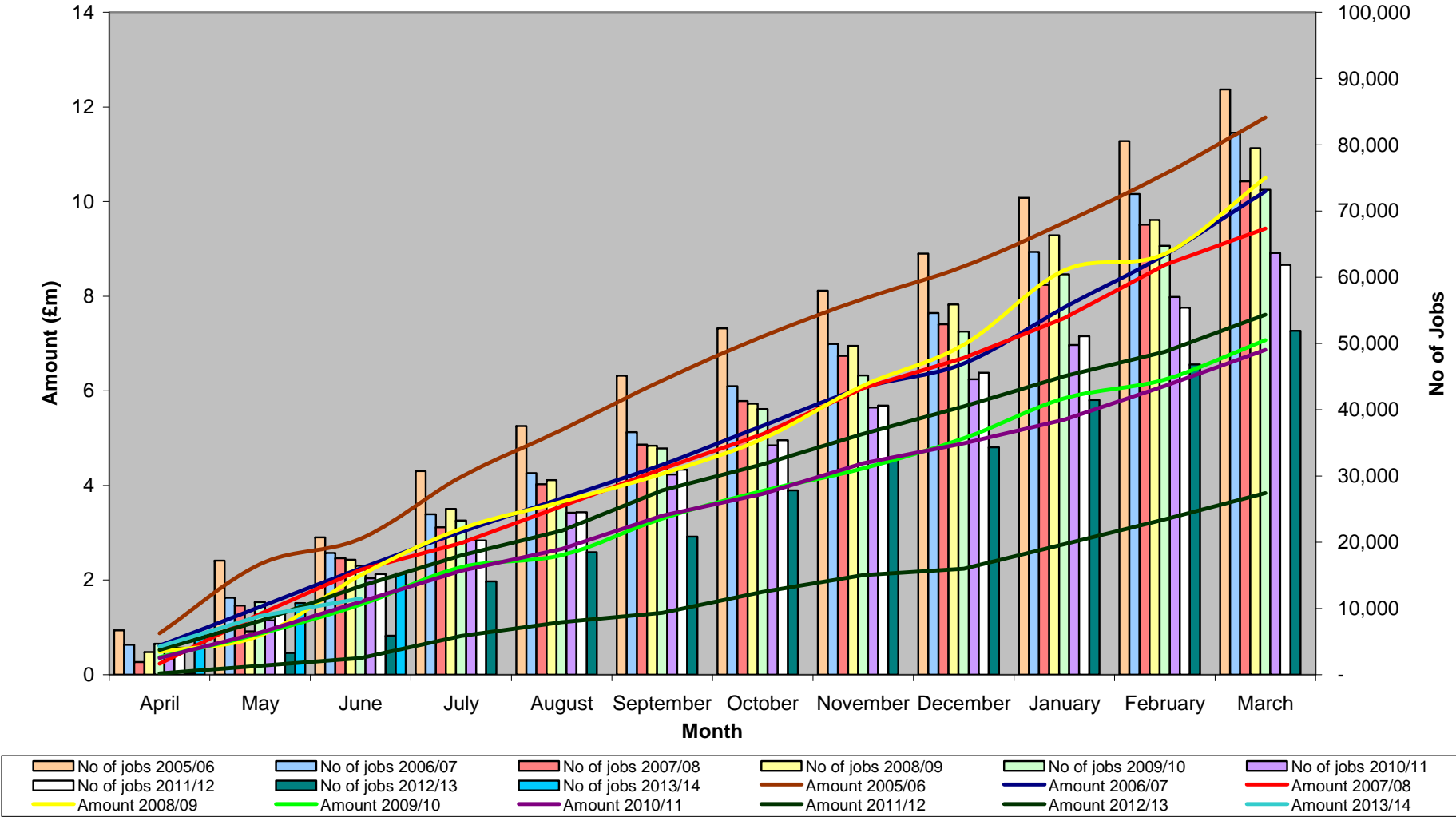
Appendix 3

Mears invoiced Repairs by trade for the period April 2013 - March 2014



Trade	2012/13	2013/14
Asbestos	-	17,973
Bricklaying	12,298	61,780
Concreting	82	775
Dayworks	10,001	408,260
Drainage	42	75
Electrical	26,013	160,518
Floor Fitter	-	295
Gas Engineer	216	125,465
Glazing	4,635	16,974
Joinery	41,858	392,781
Labourer	-	-
Other	1,819	254,945
Painting	176	18,667
Plastering	11,598	68,174
Plumbing	59,228	231,129
Roofing	62,191	402,082
TOTAL	230,157	2,159,893

Comparison of Responsive Repairs to Previous Years





Report to Resources Committee

10 September 2013

Title: Sickness Absence and Human Resources Update

Report of: Support Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on general HR initiatives and developments from 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013 to include sickness absence, and learning and development activity.

Employee and HR Monitoring Digest

2. Attached at Appendix 1 to this report is an analysis of the key employee data and HR monitoring to provide the Committee with an overview of the company's performance and key priorities. There are no areas to highlight

Sickness Absence Update

3. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of the sickness absence levels for the period from April to June 2013.
4. Appendix 3 provides the reasons for absence within each directorate of the company for the period April to June 2013.
5. In comparing absence between April 2013 and June 2013 with same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred:-
 - The total sickness absence for the period equates to 1.63 days per person compared to 3.01 days for the same period last year which is a reduction of 45.85%
 - Short term absence is defined as a period of less than 15 working days in duration and long term absence is greater than 15 days in duration. Short term absence for the period was 0.83 days per person and long term absence was 0.80 days. This compares with 0.87 days short term absence and 2.14 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents a reduction of 4.60% in short term absence. Long term absence has decreased by 62.62%.

- The biggest cause of absence was post operation recovery with 164.6 days lost compared to 197 days lost last year. This is a decrease of 16.45%
 - Stress related absence was 35.8 days for the period April to June 2013 compared to 393.6 for the same period last year. This equates to a 90.9% reduction. There was no reported stress absence in April 2013 and this is a clear indication that our health and wellbeing initiatives are effective in reducing absence caused through stress.
6. A personal support package continues to be provided to employees who are absent due to stress to include occupational health, home visits, counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Managing Sickness Absence

7. The company has held six sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period. These meetings are triggered in response to four periods of absence or two periods of 15 days or more in a rolling 12 month period.
8. Two employees were issued with first written cautions following an absence review meeting. One employee was issued with a second written caution. One employee is now being managed under procedure two and no caution was issued.
9. Under procedure two an absence management review (long term absence) considers an employee's health and future employability with the company. Options discussed at the absence reviews include phased return to work, redeployment, work life balance, reduced hours, reasonable adjustments to the working environment and ill health retirement.
10. In the period April 2013 to June 2013, two employees attended an occupational health physician's appointment as a result of absence review meetings.
11. In the period April 2013 to June 2013, seven cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)/counselling sessions were supported by the company.
12. In the period April 2013 to June 2013, eight employees were referred to occupational health for an initial assessment. Twelve employees attended an occupational health review.
13. Two employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period April 2013 to June 2013.
14. Management information and guidance on managing sickness absence is provided to managers on a monthly basis.

Health and Wellbeing

15. We will be assessed for the bronze level of the Better Health at Work Award in November 2013. This requires the Company to hold 3 health and wellbeing events from April 2013 to October 2013. The aim of each event is to increase knowledge on a range of health and wellbeing topics.

16. In March 2013 employees were encouraged to complete an online survey (Health Needs Assessment) to determine health and wellbeing priorities for the three events. Employees who could not access the survey online were offered the option of completing the survey in paper format. The aim of the survey was to understand the following:-
 - What health issues are important to employees
 - The ways in which employees would like to receive health information
 - How they would like to take part in health improvement activities.
17. 158 online surveys and three paper surveys were returned which equated to a 50% response rate.
18. The priorities raised by employees were; fitness, healthy eating and weight management and cancer care.
19. Rather than just a one-off event, a week-long promotion and activities took place to include fitness, healthy eating and lifestyle changes.
20. National Walking Month was held Monday 13 to Friday 17 May. The aim was to highlight the benefits of the exercise and how it can easily be incorporated into everyday life.
21. Employees were also encouraged to take part in the company's '**Why 'weight', get walking**' challenge. 12 teams registered for the event with 118 employees taking part (37% of employees) by setting up walking teams within their department. In a period of 5 days employees had logged 32,016 minutes, almost 534 hours or just over 22 days.
22. The Health Needs Assessment identified that almost 30% of respondents would like further information on cancer care. Julie Tucker, Health Improvement Specialist on bowel and breast cancer screening, from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead was commissioned to provide briefings on the subject to employees.
23. The briefings took place over a two-month period and were delivered at housing offices and Keelman House. 123 (38%) employees attended a cancer awareness briefing.
24. Although we have had success in our management of stress, this was still the biggest cause of absence in the period April 2012 to March 2013. We therefore dedicated our third event to stress. The "Stress Down Day" event did take place on 21 August 2013 and will had 23 exhibitors. We will update the Resource Committee in the next quarter of outcomes.
25. The event promoted local services available to support employees to include healthy eating, exercise, volunteering, counselling, drug and alcohol and financial support.
26. We continue to investigate initiatives that will help us to better understand the causes of depression, anxiety and stress. We aim to use the knowledge gained in this area to research new initiatives to assist employees to manage their condition and remain in work.

Information Sharing

27. The company continues to work with Gateshead Council to more closely align our services through sharing information and initiatives.

Other HR initiatives and developments

28. The chiropodist has attended Keelman House on three occasions in the period April 2013 to June 2013. Twenty-eight appointments were attended by employees. The chiropodist also carried out appointments at Blaydon housing office where seven employees attended.
29. The Pay Day Pamper Days have been reintroduced. Three sessions have been held and 24 employees attended appointments in the period April 2013 to June 2013.

Work Life Balance

30. In the period April to June 2013, the following work life balance applications have been approved:

No of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
3	Applications to reduce working hours
2	Application for compressed hours

Investigation and Disciplinary

31. In the period April to June 2013 the following activities have taken place:

Investigation	Outcome
1	Progressed to Disciplinary meeting
Disciplinary	Outcome
1	1 Dismissal
Appeals	Outcome
1	To be heard by the Resource Committee September 2013

Grievances

32. In the period April to June 2013, there were no reported grievances.

Bullying and Harassment

33. In the period April to June 2013 there were no allegations of bullying or harassment.

Whistleblowing

34. In the period April to June 2013, there were no reported incidents.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

35. In the period April to June 2013, the company has advertised 7 jobs as follows:

Job title	Method of recruitment	Number of applications
Housing Manager – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	8
Older Persons Housing Manager – Customers & Communities	Internal to TGHC employees only	5
Administration Assistant Housing Services – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	3
Leasehold Officer – Corporate Services	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	19
Customer Service Assistant – Customers & Communities	Advertised Externally	80
Technical Clerk – Corporate Services	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	5
Administration Assistant Housing Services – Customers & Communities	Advertised Externally	128

Child Care Scheme

36. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In June 2013 thirteen employees were in the scheme.

First Assist Employee Care Service

37. The Employee Care service provides employees with 24 hour health and wellbeing services including counselling, legal and financial information 365 days a year.
38. The scheme costs £1,231.20 per year based on the employee headcount. Our monitoring indicates very low usage of the scheme by employees which has been widely promoted. We have consulted with Trade Unions and Employees and we will be ending the scheme in October 2013. It is our intention to ensure employees receive the support they need through Health and Wellbeing advocates who have been trained to offer confidential advice and signposting to relevant services.

Learning and Development Activity

Diversity, Dignity and Respect Awareness

39. A Diversity, Dignity and Respect Workshop was held in May which used interactive drama to educate and empower employees on this key subject. The session was a 'mop up' for employees who had not attended the previous programme which was rolled out across the company.

Customer Service Training

40. In response to a need identified by senior managers, a bespoke session was developed by the Organisational Development Team and delivery began in June. Using the latest techniques to facilitate learning, the consistent messages and tools of customer service have been re-enforced, receiving excellent feedback. This is an on-going programme which is mandatory training for all employees.

Needle stick and bodily fluids training

41. This session was delivered by an external provider in response to feedback from the Caretaking service on the need for more awareness in this important area. The bespoke session was delivered to Caretakers.

Safeguarding Training Needs Analysis

42. The company is an active member of the Safeguarding Adults and Children's boards and accesses the borough wide training opportunities available. To identify future requirements, a training needs analysis was circulated with updated processes and procedures, to identify the requirement for further training. Of the responses received to date there are 109 employees requiring further training in Safeguarding Adults and 159 for Safeguarding Children, however work is being done with the Council to refine reporting processes and accuracy of information to inform the plan going forward.

Qualifications

43. To align the application process for qualification funding support with the appraisal cycle, applications were invited in April. There were 6 new applications received, 3 were approved, 3 were declined and 4 employees continue to study.

Health and Safety Training

44. In the period April to June 2013 the following health and safety training has been delivered:
- Asbestos Awareness
 - COSHH Interactive
 - Driving Safety
 - DSE Interactive
 - Fire Safety
 - Health and Safety for Managers
 - Induction Safety Interactive
 - Manual Handling Interactive

- Office Safety Interactive
- Stress Management

ICT Training

45. In the period April to June 2013 the following ICT training and development has been delivered:
- E learning Module for Keystone Asbestos Register. This online module created in-house, introduces key users to the basics of the Keystone Asset Management Software, in particular the Asbestos Register module. During the period April to June 2013 35 users have completed the module

Link to values

46. This report links to the following company values: -
- Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
 - Being caring and respecting
 - A commitment to all our employees
 - Embracing equality

Impact on Customers

47. Sickness absence impacts on the level of service provided to customers. Every effort is taken to keep this to a minimum. Managing absence and delivering in our commitment to have a well trained and responsive workforce will directly lead to improved services to customers.

Risk Management Implications

48. Manager's not managing sickness in accordance with Policy has been identified as an operational risk and controls and future actions are in place to mitigate the risk.
49. Absence due to an epidemic has also been identified as an operational risk and if there was an epidemic which significantly reduced the workforce, this would be addressed through the Business Continuity Plan once it has been launched and gone live.

Financial Implications

50. The financial cost of sickness absence to the company for the period April to June 2013 was £54,975 as compared to £104,901 for the same period last year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

51. The company's commitment to being an equal opportunities employer is an integral part of every aspect of the company's activities. All training is designed to meet the diverse needs of the community and employees.

Value for Money implications

52. We continue to manage sickness absence in order to maximise service delivery to tenants and customers. Through an increased use of internal delivery and development value for money is being achieved. We aim to use the most beneficial methods of delivery to maximise the return for the benefit of the company and customers. Value for money principles are followed in all aspects of the service to include work life balance requests, recruitment and selection.

Health Implications

53. The initiatives and prevention work that has been introduced over the past year have had a positive impact on the health of our employees. The clearest measure of this is the achievement of Investors in People (IiP) Gold award and Health and wellbeing award.
54. The company's commitment to learning and development is embedded in the Investors in People award (IiP) and is applied consistently across the company. Our approach to provide tailored learning will have a positive impact on employee's health and overall wellbeing and will minimise any stress.

Environmental Implications



55. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.



Consultation carried out


56. The company's HR consultants EEF Northern and Unions have been consulted on aspects of the report. Trade Unions are always consulted prior to any changes being implemented and we continue to enjoy a good relationship with them. A number of the courses delivered and developed were identified by employees, as part of the annual appraisal process.

Recommendations

57. The views of the committee are sought on whether the committee is satisfied with the update on general HR initiatives and developments.
58. The committee is asked to note the ending of the First Assist Employee Care Service.

					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14					
Performance Measure		Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Number of people employed by TGHC					
Male		137			
Female		187			
Permanent Employees		323			
Temporary Employees		1			
Full Time		261			
Part Time		63			
Number of starters (since 01 April 2013)		5			
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2013)		6			
Ill health retirements		0			
Number of employees seeking redeployment		0			
Diversity Monitoring					
Gender					
Male		137			
Female		187			
Age					
Under 18		0			
18 – 25		21			
26 – 35		108			
36 – 45		71			
46 – 55		88			
56 – 65		35			
66 +		1			
Disability					
Perceived themselves as disabled		36			
Do not perceive themselves as disabled		288			

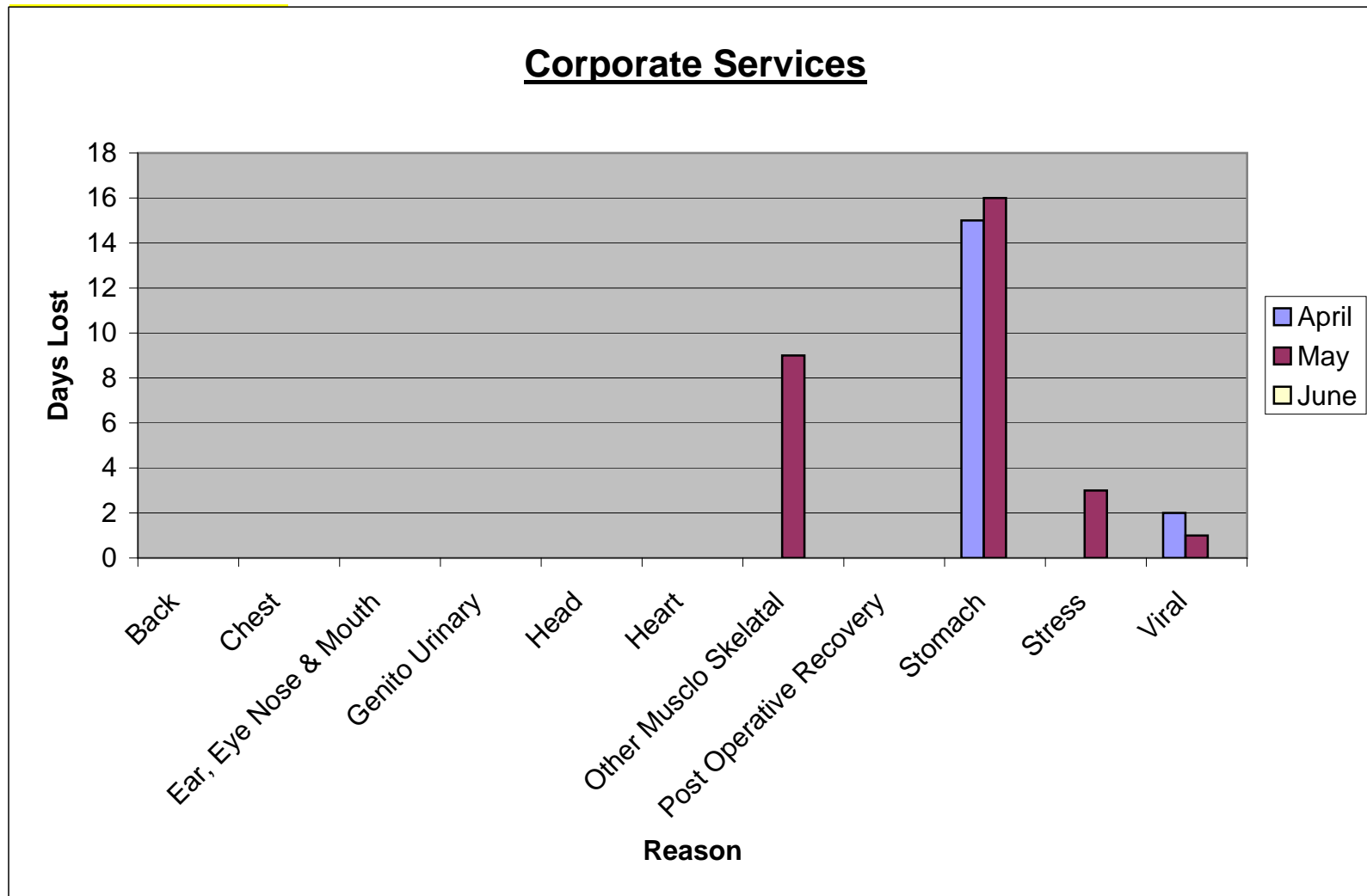
 The Gateshead Housing Company Working with Gateshead Council					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14					
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	
Ethnicity					
White British	310				
White Irish	2				
White Other	1				
White and Black Caribbean	0				
White and Black African	1				
White and Asian	1				
Asian or Asian British Indian	1				
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0				
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1				
Asian or Asian British Other	1				
Black or Black British Caribbean	0				
Black or Black British African	4				
Black or Black British Other	1				
Chinese	1				
Other	0				
Recruitment Monitoring					
Number of BME applicants for posts					
Application for employment	12				
Short listed for interview	5				
Offered post	0				
Number of disabled applicants for posts					
Application for Employment	10				
Short listed for interview	3				
Offered post	0				
HR advisory issues					
Investigations	1				
Disciplinary	1				
Suspensions	1				
Oral Warning	0				
First Written Warning	0				
Final Written Warning	0				
Dismissals	1				
Appeals Submitted	1				
Stage 1 Grievance	0				
Stage 2 Grievance	0				

 The Gateshead Housing Company Working with Gateshead Council					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14					
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	
Bullying and Harassment Whistleblowing Capability	0 0 0				
Health and Wellbeing					
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April to March 2014)	1.63				
Total number of working days lost to sickness	488.8				
Number of Occupational Health appointments					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	8 12				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	2 0				
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	7				
Number of Absence Management Reviews					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	6 0				
Number of employees who have had a phased return	2				
Learning and Development					
Number of new staff receiving induction	5				
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications (report in Qtr 2)	4				

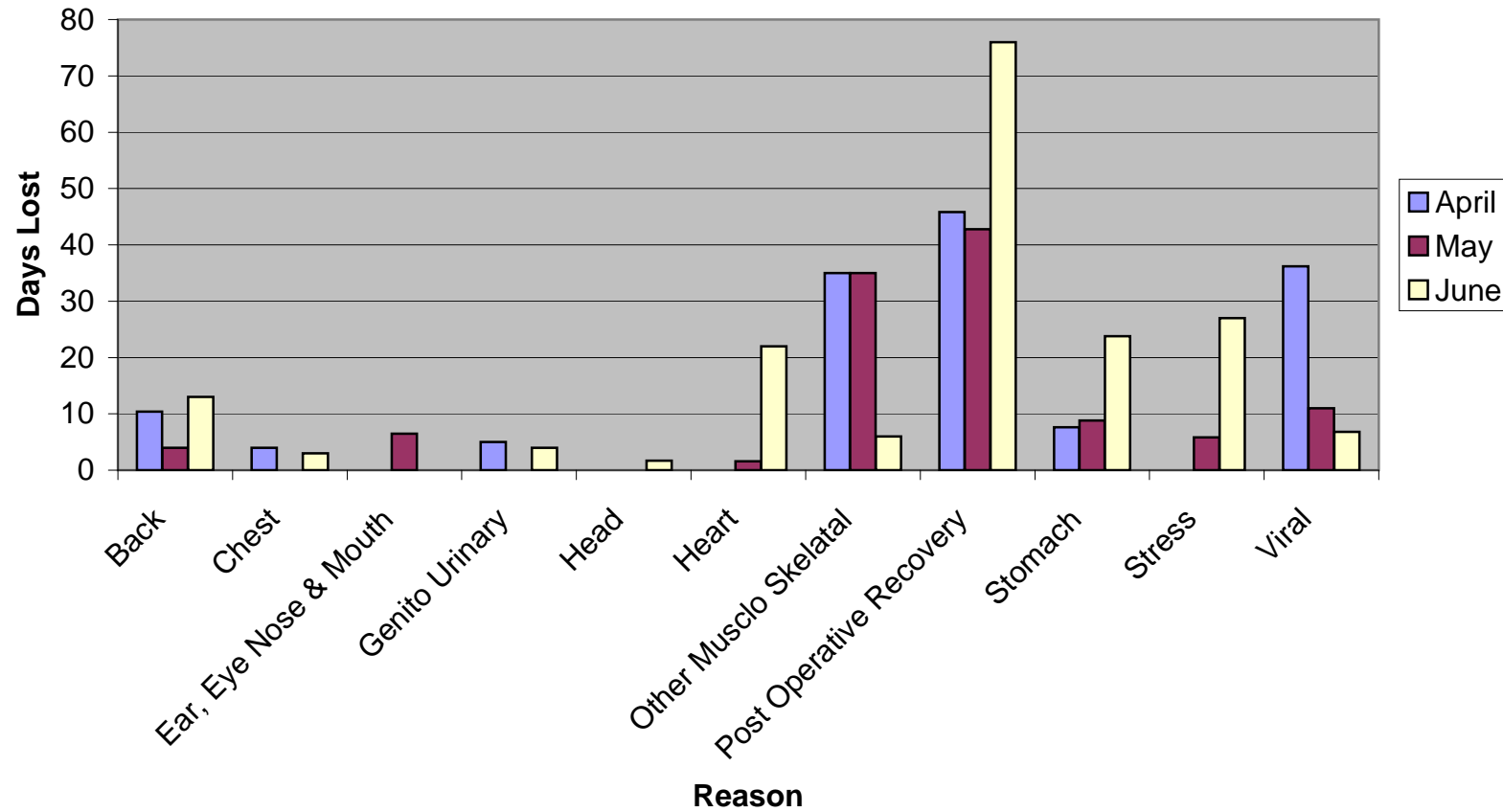
Actual Days lost per employee per month to date

2013/2014	Customers & Communities - Customer Services	Customers & Communities Neighbourhood Services	Customers & Communities Property Services	Corporate Services Finance	Corporate Services Support Services	All Employees TGHC	TGHC Cumulative	2012/13 TGHC Cumulative	Days Lost per month	Days Lost Short Term Absence	No of Occurrences Short Term	Days Lost Long Term Absence	No of Occurrences Long Term
April	0.54	0.72	0.03	0.35	0.38	0.54	0.54	0.95	161.00	0.34	29.00	0.20	3.00
May	0.15	0.70	0.19	0.59	0.65	0.48	1.02	2.06	144.50	0.23	21.00	0.25	4.00
June	0.59	0.95	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.61	1.63	3.01	183.30	0.26	23.00	0.35	6.00
July								3.57					
August								3.96					
September								4.22					
October								4.69					
November								5.27					
December								5.76					
January								6.67					
February								7.18					
March								7.67					
Cumulative by service area													

* Days Lost = No of days absence / FTE in the service



Customers & Communities



Report to Resources Committee

10 September 2013



Title: Health and Safety Update

Report of: Managing Director

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with a report on the company's health and safety activities for the period April to June 2013.

Background

2. The Safety, Health and Environmental Team ("SHE Team") are responsible for a number of activities designed to eliminate, reduce and mitigate accidents in the workplace and to ensure, safety of residents and members of the public who access our services and premises.
3. In addition to this the team act in an advisory role to ensure company wide compliance with a number of statutory and regulatory requirements including: -
 - Occupational Health and Safety
 - Health and Safety Training
 - Occupational Hygiene
 - Environmental Management
4. They also have responsibility for ensuring the company's compliance with statutory regulatory requirements as follows: -
 - Water Management - Risk assessments and water testing.
 - Electrical Safety - Cyclical electrical testing, fixed wire testing, portable appliance testing and emergency lighting testing.
 - Fire Safety - Risk assessment, maintenance, repair and testing of fire alarms and fire appliances.
 - Passengers Lifts Operations - Lift Repairs, maintenance, refurbishment and upgrade to DDA standard.
5. They are also responsible for the coordination and monitoring of health and safety on construction sites including:

- CDM Coordination (Construction, Design, Management) and Control of Contractors
- Site Waste Management Plans

Policy, Procedure and Safe Systems of Work Update

6. The Asbestos Management Plan and policy have been reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation and learning from reported incidents. Training has been provided to ensure compliance with changes.

Partners Activity Update

- 7 In the period April to June 2013, we have reviewed the asbestos policy and delivered awareness training to Mears operatives. We continue to monitor and review all asbestos incidents and work closely with Mears Safety Advisors for continued compliance and safe systems of working.

- 8 During the period April to June 2013 the following joint Health and Safety site visits have taken place with Mears:

- Voids and Major Voids
- Painting Programme
- Fire Damaged Properties

9. No significant areas of weakness were identified on the site visits. A number of minor recommendations and areas of improvement have been agreed for implementation.

Accident Reporting

10. We have updated our system for recording of accidents and incidents to an on line system which has been launched to all employees. Accidents reported in the period April to June 2013 show an increase and this may be attributed to awareness raising of the reporting system. -

Accidents / Incidents Near Misses TGHC Employees

11. In the period April to June 2013 there has been three minor accidents and two near misses reported as follows:-
- 1 employee was cut on the hand by the fall of an unsafely stacked fire door at Regent Court
 - 1 employee was bruised on the chest when they stretched over a garden fence
 - 1 employee suffered injuries to the lower back as a result of a trip and fall in a tenant's garden
 - 1 employee suffered a near miss from falling concrete debris at Abbott Court
 - 1 employee suffered a near miss from a falling glass bottle in the bin chute room

Accidents / Incidents Near Misses to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

12. In the period April to June 2013 eleven minor incidents, one near miss and one reportable accident have been reported as follows:

- Former tenant had a near miss by falling concrete debris
- Plumber suffered minor back injuries from lowering a soil pipe
- Roofer fell from a garage roof and fractured his wrist
- Plasterer slipped and suffered contusions to his nose
- Labourer suffered minor cuts to head while loading old fence timbers onto a vehicle
- Glazier suffered a minor injury to the eyes when removing the eye protection
- Gas Engineer slipped and suffered a sprained ankle
- Electrician suffered a minor cut to his head from a kitchen unit coming off the wall
- Joiner suffered a cut on his finger from a rough edge of a plinth
- Resident Liaison Officer suffered a dog bite
- A contractor suffered a cut from a knife when laying the flooring
- A plumber suffered a cut from a sharp edge on a pipe when stripping redundant copper piping.
- A property inspector slipped and fell onto a handrail and fractured his right shoulder (RIDDOR)

13. All accidents and reported violent incidents have been investigated and follow up action taken to include a review of safe systems of work.

Violence and Aggression to TGHC Employees

- 9 Cases of Verbal Abuse
- 7 Cases of Threatening Behaviour

Violence and Aggression to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

- 1 Case of Verbal Abuse

Asbestos Management

14. During the period April to June 2013, Gateshead Council has carried out an internal audit of the Asbestos Management process. The final audit report and recommendations will be released in quarter two.

15. During the period April to June 2013 asbestos surveys has been requested on the following areas of activity: voids, and gas servicing, maintaining decency, painting programme, repairs, adaptations and maintenance and fire improvement works.

16. The following asbestos surveys have taken place for refurbishment and demolition surveys (R&D):

- 363 Maintaining decency
- 3 gas servicing
- 70 repairs and maintenance
- 38 major works

- 20 voids
- 17. We are developing an inspection regime for Multi-storey buildings to regularly monitor the condition of known Asbestos Containing Materials.
- 18. During the period April to June 2013 there were four reported incidents of accidental disturbance of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's). Action has been taken with our partners to mitigate further risk and prevent reoccurrence.

Fire Safety Management

- 19. The Housing Fire Safety strategy continues to be monitored with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).
- 20. During the reporting period we have reviewed the working protocols between TWFRS and TGHC.
- 21. In the period April to June 2013 Sheltered housing joint visits (TGHC and TWFRS) has commenced. Findings and recommendations from fire safety audits will be monitored through action plans developed to rectify deficiencies
- 22. The work programme for the Sheltered Housing buildings has been shared with TWFRS and a formal request to extend the deadline for completion of fire safety works to April 2014 has been accepted.
- 23. Fire safety improvement works to 19 Multi Storey Blocks have now been completed. Fire Risk Assessments for these locations will be updated and a copy of the risk assessments issued to TWFRS.
- 24. The Fire Safety improvements works in Sheltered Housing has commenced. McErlane Square, Harrison Court and Birtley Villas are the first schemes benefiting from the improvement works.
- 25. A bespoke sprinkler solution is currently being tested at Regent Court. The commissioning of a system for the multi storey is linked to fire safety works improvements.

Legionella Control

- 26. Monthly meetings with our maintenance contractor are ongoing and no significant risks have been identified.
- 27. In the period April to June 2013 no positive tests were reported.
- 28. 49 premises have had a Water Hygiene Risk Assessment. The remaining 25 premises will be completed in quarter 2.
- 29. Routine water sampling of 74 premises will commence in quarter two to verify the effectiveness of the water hygiene monitoring.

Cyclical Repair and Maintenance Update

30. The periodical meetings with Gateshead Council Local Environmental Services and the Gateshead Housing Company are progressing with the monitoring of the delivery of the cyclical maintenance program for 2013-14.
31. No immediate actions have been identified during this reporting period.

Lift Maintenance

32. No relevant immediate actions reported during the period April to June 2013.
33. There were 12 reported lift entrapments in the period April to June 2013. Passengers were released to our agreed service standard response time.

Update on the Company Construction Related Activities

34. There are twelve construction related projects ongoing with notifications to the HSE.
35. Works are on going on twelve sites as follows: -
 - Sprinkler installation to Regent Court,
 - Insulation works to non traditional properties in Springwell (2 sites)
 - Maintaining decency works covering various estates across the Borough (2 sites)
 - Planned painting works across various sites
 - Fire safety improvement works to Sheltered Housing
 - Tunstall Telecare upgrades across the Borough
 - Lifts Replacement at Pleasant Place unit C
 - Barnes close electrical upgrade works
 - McErlane square electrical upgrade
 - Stoneygate conversion works
36. During this reporting period all working sites have been visited and were found to be working to agreed site rules and regulations.
37. During this period we had a number of asbestos related incidents and we assisting the HSE in the investigation of the Dangerous Occurrences.

Update on Health and Safety Legislation Changes

38. There are no legislative changes to report

Links to Values

39. This report links to the following company values: -
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
 - Being caring and respecting
 - A commitment to all our employees
 - Embracing equality.

Impact on Customers

40. The improvements identified and actions carried out will help us to provide healthy and safe environments for employees, residents, members of the public and partners.

Risk Management Implications

41. Not meeting the requirement of current and new Health and Safety legislation has been identified as an operational risk for the company.

Financial Implications

42. The Head of Corporate Services confirms that a budget is available to support the activities mentioned in this report through revenue or capital budgets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

43. Detailed Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on all Health & Safety policies and procedures to ensure that they do not adversely impact on any customers.

Value for Money Implications

44. Value for money principles are followed in all health and safety activity.

Health Implications

45. The company's approach to Health and Safety, embedded within everything that we do and the actions specifically mentioned within this report, ultimately will have a positive impact on people's health and overall wellbeing. By working to ensure that any services we provide meet the needs of the customers, partners and of employees and do not cause undue stress to either party.

Environmental Implications

46. The work detailed in this report will be carried out to ensure we meet our ISO 14001 standards and principles. We will make choices that reflect our social responsibility to improve the environment in which we work and live.

Recommendation

47. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the update on health and safety activities and developments.



Report to Resources Committee

10 September 2013

Title: Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2012/13

Report of: Managing Director

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with a draft of the Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2012/13 for approval.

Background

2. Equality and diversity is at the heart of everything the company does, as highlighted in the company value of 'Embracing Equality'.
3. The company's Single Equality Scheme brings together all areas of our approach to Equality and Diversity in one document, providing a clear outline for all employees, customers and Board Members.
4. The Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 places an expectation on public organisations to publish key equality information on employees and service users.
5. The company has produced a report annually providing a public account of how we are progressing equality and diversity in relation to tenants, leaseholders, employees and stakeholders, demonstrating our compliance with the equality duty.

Summary

6. The report covers the financial year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 and is attached at the appendix to this report. The report covers a number of areas including:
 - Information on the legislation and regulation on equality and diversity
 - Highlights of our activities during each quarter of 2012/13
 - Information on our progress towards the goals set out in the Single Equality Scheme
 - Monitoring information relating to our customer profile, satisfaction information and employee information
 - Our focus for equality in 2013/14

7. Subject to approval of the draft report at this committee, the report will be designed and made available on our website and will be issued on request.

Link to values

8. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Being motivated, trained, and committed
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
 - Caring and respecting
 - Embracing equality
 - A commitment to all our employees.

Impact on tenants

9. Equality legislation expects public organisations to ensure that tenants have access to clear and transparent information to understand how we are working to progress equality. This report provides supplementary information to what will be provided to all tenants and leaseholders via the Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders, due to be issued in October 2013.
10. Access to clear information enables tenants and leaseholders to hold us to account and challenge us where appropriate to improve services.

Risk Management Implications

11. Not meeting the requirements of current and new diversity legislation has been identified as an operational risk for the company, which if breached could lead to significant financial loss and risk of reputation.
12. The annual report fulfils the requirements of the specific duties contained within the Equality Act to provide certain equality information to demonstrate that organisations have complied with the general duty. Although as an arm's length management organisation, the company is not considered a listed body, it is considered good practice for us to follow these principles.

Financial Implications

13. The Head of Corporate Services confirms that any costs arising from this report can be met from existing budgets. There is an allocated budget to progress equality and diversity work within the company. Any future financial implications will be reported to this committee.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. The Single Equality Scheme provides a focus for our approach to being an equal opportunities employer and service provider, promoting equality in relation to access to goods, facilities and services and helping us to ensure that no individual or group experiences direct or indirect discrimination. The annual report sets out how we are currently achieving this and how we plan to progress it in the future.

Value for Money Implications

15. The actions outlined in this report help us to understand the specific needs of our customers and employees and respond accordingly. This results in value for money savings by getting things right at the outset rather than having to amend or correct service provision in the future.
16. With specific reference to this report, it is proposed that rather than printing a stock of copies, it is made available via our website and then printed on request.

Health Implications

17. The annual report outlines highlights the wellbeing initiatives the company has embarked on during 2012/13 for employees.

Environmental Implications

18. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report, although it is proposed to prevent wastage, the report will be promoted and made available on the website and printed by request.

Consultation carried out

19. The draft of this report will has been reviewed by reviewed by service managers involved in the delivery of activities relating to equality. It will also be reviewed by the Involvement Service Improvement Group to agree the designed version to be placed on the website.

Recommendations

20. The committee is recommended to:
 - approve the draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2012/13;
 - agree to the report being=made available on the company website.

Foreword

Welcome to the Equality and Diversity report for 2012/13. Embracing equality has been central to the way we have delivered services over the last year, considering the needs our employees and customers in the decisions we have made.

This report highlights some of the work we have undertaken to support our priorities and those of Gateshead Council. This is an ongoing process and we continue to focus on providing a workplace where employees feel comfortable to be themselves, performing to the best of their ability and to provide services which meet the current and future needs of our tenants and leaseholders.

In the current economic climate where resources are increasingly pressured this can be difficult, however simply highlights the reason for keeping equality in the forefront of our minds, to ensure that we continue to look for potential impacts of our decisions on our communities and the people who work for us. To do this we need to continue to collect and update quality data so we understand the people working at the housing company and we have a true picture of the communities we serve.

You will find in this report, some of the highlights of this year as well as some of the activities we will focus on in 2013/14.

Jon Mallen-Beadle
Managing Director and Corporate Lead for Equality

Introduction

Embracing Equality has been a company value for a number of years now and reflects the approach the organisation takes to consider equality throughout the business.

The Single Equality Scheme placed a wider focus on equality, embedding this into each service area rather it being something which stands alone. The three main goals of the scheme are:

- Maintain a corporate commitment to equality issues
- Work in partnership with customers and stakeholders to deliver equitable services and improve social cohesion in the borough
- Be an equal opportunities employer with a workforce that represents the community it serves and is committed to equality and diversity.

The Managing Director is the Corporate Lead for Equality and regularly communicates messages to the company on key activities.

The Resources Committee receive a quarterly Equality update report which summarises our activities and any relevant legislative changes or best practice. This ensures that we continue to be monitored and challenged to improve.

Legislation and Regulation

In the last year, the Equality Act, and specifically the Public Sector Equality Duty has come into the fore with the Government instigating a review of the duty to determine whether it is operating as intended. Whilst the outcome of this review is still unknown, there remains a requirement for public organisations to have due regard to equality and the need to advance equality in our practices. This is central to the way that services are delivered and decisions are taken to introduce, change or withdraw services.

Example: Welfare Reform Equality Impact Assessment

Over the last 12 months there has been significant work involved in preparing the organisation and affected tenants on the changes to benefits being introduced through Welfare Reform. A working group was set up in the company to oversee this area and discuss the potential impact and any associated actions. To support this area, an Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken. This looked at the breakdown of who was due to be affected by the under occupation rules and whether there were any specific groups who would be more likely to be affected and therefore potentially require additional information or support. It was recognised in particular that disabled tenants who have a spare room for storage of equipment and those who have properties with major adaptations for their disability would be affected by these changes. As a result, the Advice and Support officers attended and provided information to a range of disability groups including Gateshead Council's Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership (PDSI) and have provided advice on applying to the council's Discretionary Housing Fund for support.

This is an area that is continuously evolving and as a result, the equality implications of the changes are considered as part of this process.

In addition to the Equality Act, the Involvement and Empowerment standard of the Homes and Communities Agency's regulatory framework also places a requirement on landlords to treat all tenants with fairness and respect and demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs

What did we do in 2012/13?

These are just some of the highlights of our activities over the last year.

April – June

- Raised awareness of the Single Equality Scheme and our equality goals at a range of events attended as part of Opportunity Knocks.
- Supported Carers Week in June, working with Gateshead Carer's Association to host an event for local employers and encourage them to sign up to the 'Gateshead Carer Friendly, Employer Charter Mark'
- Equality and procurement officers from the company attended an event hosted by Assessment North East and the Equality and Human Rights

Commission called 'Buying Better Outcomes' designed to help identify the equality requirements of public organisations when procuring goods and services.

- Hosted a joint forum of the Disabled Persons Housing Forum and BME Housing Forum supporting Gateshead Together Week.
- Attended events to mark National Refugee Week.
- Targeted customers to inform them about the last opportunities to access free insulation in their properties through our partnership with Gateshead Council and Gateshead Warmzone, recognising that our most vulnerable customers are also the ones who would benefit most from improving their insulation and thus reducing their fuel bills.

July - September

- Supported Newcastle Pride in July for the 5th consecutive year, sponsoring and attending the event, gathering information on experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender friendly workplaces and landlords.
- Held drop in events in Keelman House and Blaydon office with Gateshead Carers to provide advice and support to employees who are carers within the organisation.

October – December

- Supported the North East Equality Awards, co-sponsoring an award for Equality in the Housing Sector for contractors.
- Issued the prepopulated customer profile form with the rent statement to collect missing profile information and ensure the information we hold is correct.
- Took part in an event called 'Dignity in Gateshead' aimed at providing information about the Dignity in Gateshead Charter which includes some key principles to be applied across service delivery
- Provided training and support to our Health and Wellbeing Advocates.

January - March

- Received our results for the Stonewall workplace equality index.
- Held our equality event for contractors 'Equality and Diversity: It Pays to Know'
- Carried out an exercise to gather profile data on leaseholders and those who sublet their properties.
- Held our customer training course 'Understanding our differences' for involved tenants including new TALISMAN members

How are we doing?

The next sections of this report show the work we have been carrying out and how this fits with progressing our three goals.

Maintain a corporate commitment to equality issues

During this year we began our review of the Single Equality Scheme to update this and ensure that the goals we had set out continue to be the relevant priorities for us as both an employer and service provider. To date we have had discussions with customers about the current scheme identifying a number of areas where this needs to be updated. We will conclude the review in 2013.

Commitment to equality within the organisation continues to start from the top with our Managing Director also identified as the Corporate Lead for equality. This sends out a clear message it is taken seriously as an organisation and is reflected in messages regarding activity and events that the company supports.

Board members receive information on the equality implications of any report being presented either to the main Board or to one of our committees to ensure that this forms part of the decision making process.

In addition to this, Resources Committee, consisting of a number of Board Members have responsibility for overseeing our activity and progress around equality. The quarterly update report provides information on key activity as well as providing any information on legislative changes or best practice which has an impact on the organisation, our employees or our customers.

We also place a requirement on our contractors to follow our equality principles and values and to demonstrate to us how they are meeting the requirements of the public sector equality duty.

Example: Equality and Diversity: It Pays to Know

Since the Single Equality Scheme was put in place, we have worked to strengthen our procurement practices around equality, reviewing the questions asked in the tendering process to ensure that the systems are robust and ensuring that organisations who are contracted to work with us, work to our values and principles.

Procurement processes in 2012/13 highlighted an issue with some organisations failing to meet the criteria of the equality sections or simply failing to provide any responses in pre-qualification questionnaires. This highlighted a gap in the understanding of private organisations of what the equality legislation meant to them and what was expected of them when working with us.

This has started a process of the company working more closely with both our direct contractors and their sub-contractors to help them understand the Equality Act, what this means to them and what we expect once they are working on contracts directly or indirectly contracted by the housing company. In March 2013, we invited representatives from a range of organisations to attend an event

called 'Equality and Diversity: It Pays to Know'. Over 35 attendees came to the event, held in partnership between the housing company, Gateshead Council and Assessment North East.

This event gave attendees an overview of the duty and its requirements and provided a chance for the organisations to discuss the barriers they face and how we can support them to overcome these. A particular success of the event was bringing organisations of different sizes together ranging from sole traders to large companies. This helped provide each other and the company with an understanding of how this can affect their level of knowledge and their ability to influence equality practices.

Comments from attendees including 'Well worth the experience', 'Enjoyable and informative' and 'Good to understand the legal requirements, challenges and how to overcome these'

Involvement, partnership and access

Knowing our customers

In order to make sure that we are providing the most appropriate services to our tenants and leaseholders, we need to make sure that the information we hold is correct and up to date.

For a number of years we have been collecting information at any opportunity where we have contact with tenants. This is a key performance indicator for the company, and forms part of the information used by Gateshead Council to monitor our performance in line as an arm's length management organisation.

At the end of this year (31 March 2013) we had 19867 tenancies with:

- 526 BME tenants, with the majority being Black African
- 712 tenants under 25
- 3449 being over 75
- 5659 tenants have told us they have a disability, with mobility difficulties and mental health difficulties being the highest proportion
- 7017 tenants have indicated their religion or belief with 4748 of these declaring that they are Christian.
- 6335 tenants have declared their sexuality with 117 stating they are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.
- 1017 stated that they required information in a specific format, specifically with 861 stating they require large print.

This year we recognised that the information we held relating to leaseholders was significantly lower than that relating to tenants. In order to address this we commissioned a targeted exercise by an external organisation to collect some of the missing information. This exercise also encouraged leaseholders who were subletting their properties to gather information from their tenants, particularly in relation to disability to identify any issues that may arise or cause potential access issues.

Involving customers in shaping and scrutinising our services

We have worked with tenants and leaseholders during the year to influence and shape how our services are delivered. Our service standards for involvement including ensuring that our involved customers represent the community we serve. In order to measure this, we monitor our database of involved customers compared to our overall customer profile.

Specifically our Disabled Persons Housing Forum and BME Housing Forum have met quarterly to discuss the way services are provided and identify ways in which we can improve access to these services. In particular one of the issues the groups have focussed on this year is information regarding hate crime reporting, to understand the trends and issues faced by particular groups.

In July 2012, the TALISMAN, the company's independent tenant and leaseholder scrutiny panel presented their first report on anti-social behaviour to the Customers and Communities Committee. As part of this review, the panel considered the support provided for vulnerable customers and how their needs are taken into account. In particular the review highlighted the Customer Assessment Tool has an excellent tool for identifying the needs of the individual and the impact on them the anti-social behaviour is having on them..

We have continued to deliver our customer training course 'Understanding Differences in People' to involved customers to give them an understanding of equality, recognising stereotyping and how to ensure that everyone is given the appropriate respect during customer meetings. This ensures that all customers feel welcome and able to contribute in involvement sessions.

Supporting Local Communities

The company's Community Fund supported by Mears and Local Environmental Services provides cash and in kind support to a range of community groups for projects that make a difference for the communities we work in.

Groups are encouraged to make applications to the fund during the year and are successful where the projects can demonstrate that they will either:

- Support people to overcome disadvantage
- Create stronger communities
- Make Gateshead an even better place to live.

Some of the groups and activities we have supported during the year include:

- Activities to progress Gateshead Youth Assembly's Child Poverty Action Plan
- ICT equipment was supplied to Birtley Community Association to provide access to computers and the internet for local residents.
- The Older Persons Assembly was provided with funding to support their development of friendship groups to reduce social isolation in older people.
- FIFI International African Youth project was provided with funding for their Eat Together Project which includes a programme of events to encourage youngsters to learn about food and where it comes from.

Partnership working and supporting victims of anti-social behaviour

In order to work towards our equality objectives and those of Gateshead Council, we regularly work in partnership with other organisations.

In particular this year we have worked to help achieve the Safer Gateshead priority of 'Protecting & Supporting Vulnerable Victims and Communities'. Specifically in the last year we have supported 6 victims of hate crime and 83 victims of Domestic Abuse with security measures to help them feel safer in their homes. In addition we have made 1751 referrals to other agencies where we have identified that our customers experiencing anti-social behaviour require additional support including Victim Support, Safer Families and Housing Options.

We have played an active role in the Hate Crime and Tension Monitoring Group, working to deliver on the priorities of the Hate Crime Strategy for Gateshead. In particular this group has been focussing on promoting hate crime awareness and improving confidence from groups where it is known that reporting has been typically low. This includes LGB and T customers and disabled customers. We have raised awareness through our forums and through our attendance at Newcastle Pride. In total this year 59 hate crime incidents were reported to the housing company compared to 49 in the previous year.

Example: Hate Crime Training – Extremist Groups

Community Engagement Officers from South Tyneside & Gateshead Area Command were invited during April to deliver a presentation to Neighbourhood Relations Officers on extreme right wing groups and the threat which their activities pose to community cohesion. The presentation also cover radicalisation issues amongst all communities and built on previous training delivered on the Prevent agenda.

Following their attendance on the training Neighbourhood Relations Officers delivered a briefing to all neighbourhood housing offices. It is hoped that this will empower frontline officers to swiftly recognise stickers, graffiti or signage which may be a prelude to more confrontational activity or be designed to provoke a response from the local community.

An equal opportunities employer with a workforce that represents the community it serves and is committed to equality and diversity

Health and Wellbeing

In the last year we have built on the previous success of health and wellbeing initiatives to continue to be a positive employer and provide a working environment where employees feel they can be themselves and work to their full potential.

A series of 'Wellbeing at Work' sessions were held in the first half of the year including introductory sessions for any employees to support their own personal health and wellbeing. Following this, a programme of full day sessions were made available for any employees who felt they would benefit from more in depth guidance and advice.

All employees were invited this year to attend a session called SUMO (Shut Up – Move On). This was a joint initiative with Your Homes Newcastle aimed at equipping employees with skills to deal effectively with challenges faced in the workplace and at home.

To support the company's overall approach to health and wellbeing, we also appointed a number of Health and Wellbeing Advocates from across different areas of the organisation. The advocates have received a range of training to support them in their role to be able to support and signpost employees with health and wellbeing concerns as well as leading on a number of wellbeing initiatives during the year.

Training

We recognise that training and raising awareness is key to ensuring that our employees understand our equality principles and that this is reflected in their behaviour.

Our e-learning programme 'Equality and Diversity Essentials' which introduces everyone to the concepts of equality and diversity and provides an overview of the main legislation and its practical implications. All employees undertake this training on their first day within the company and as a minimum of every 3 years after this. In addition to this a supplementary package called 'Managing Diversity' is provided to all managers to understand the key role they play both in recruitment and managing situations in the work place.

A number of mental health awareness raising sessions for managers were this year. The aim of the training was to help managers to recognise the symptoms of mental health problems within their employees and provide the tools and advice on how to provide initial help and how to guide a person towards appropriate professional help.

Employees also undertook an e-learning training programme on Data Protection during the year. This training provided an overview of the rules and legislation surrounding data protection and the information we hold. The training concluded with a test with a minimum requirement to pass, thus ensuring that the employee had demonstrated their understanding of their role. This is particularly important to provide reassurance to employees and customers that people know how they are meant to handle this information.



Where will we be focussing our efforts in 2013/14?

In order to ensure that we continue to deliver on our values to embrace equality, there are a number of actions we will be undertaking this year.

- Conclude the review of the Single Equality Scheme
- Following a number of changes to the membership of the board, an equality workshop will be provided to support them in their role to challenge and question equality information provided as part of reports presented for decision making.
- We will continue to work with our main repairs and maintenance contractor Mears and other contractors to progress activities around equality and demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- We will ask employees to complete The Sunday Times and 100 Best Companies Engagement Survey to gauge levels of staff satisfaction and engagement within the company.
- We will enter the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index to measure our progress in LGBT equality.
- We will review and update our Domestic Abuse Policy and deliver an updated training programme
- We will review Hate Crime training in partnership with Safer Gateshead Council
- We will monitor the impact of the under occupancy rules on affected tenants and support them to access the appropriate advice and information.

Contacts

For further information please visit: www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk/equality

If you would like to discuss anything in this document or have an issue relating to our approach to equality and diversity please contact:

Louise Taylor
Involvement and Diversity Manager
The Gateshead Housing Company

Keelman House
Fifth Avenue Business Park
Fifth Avenue
Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead
NE11 0XA

Tel: 0191 433 5380

Fax: 0191 433 5354

Minicom: 0191 433 5349

Text: "DES" to 07642 480 4167

E-mail: louisetaylor@gatesheadhousing.co.uk

Performance Framework

Customer Profile of main tenant as at 31/03/2013

Gender	Total	%
Female	11602	58.40%
Male	8265	41.60%
Total	19867	

Age	Total	%
No Date of Birth	3	0.02%
16 - 24	712	3.58%
25 - 39	4116	20.72%
40 - 49	3499	17.61%
50 - 59	3395	17.09%
60 - 74	4693	23.62%
75 and over	3449	17.36%
Total	19867	

Ethnicity	Total	%
Asian Or Asian British Bangladeshi	12	0.06%
Asian Or Asian British Indian	11	0.06%
Asian Or Asian British Other	106	0.53%
Asian Or Asian British Pakistan	14	0.07%
Black Or Black British African	184	0.93%
Black Or Black British Caribbean	6	0.03%
Black Or Black British Other	29	0.15%
Chinese	21	0.11%
Mixed Other	24	0.12%
Mixed White & Asian	20	0.10%
Mixed White & Black African	9	0.05%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	6	0.03%
Other	84	0.42%
Refused	17	0.09%
Unknown	42	0.21%
White British	18968	95.47%
White Irish	28	0.14%
White Other	259	1.30%
Blank	27	0.14%
Total BME	526	2.65%
Total	19867	100.00%

People of a disability	Total	%
Yes	5659	28.48%
No	14114	71.04%
Not disclosed	6	0.03%
Refused	15	0.08%
Unknown	73	0.37%
Total	19867	100%

Special Requirements	Total
3RD_PARTY	18
AUDIO	48
BRAILLE	4
LARGE PRINT	861
LIP READER	6
OTHER_LANGUAGE	17
BSL INTERPRETER	17
TRANSLATION	24
TYPETALK	22
Total	1017

Faith or Religion	Total	%
Buddhist	8	0.04%
Christian	4748	23.90%
Hindu	3	0.02%
Humanist	18	0.09%
Jewish	2	0.01%
Muslim	96	0.48%
No religion	952	4.79%
Other	1189	5.98%
Prefer not to say	219	1.10%
Sikh	1	0.01%
Blank	12631	63.58%
Total	19867	100.00%

Sexuality	Total	%
Bisexual	52	0.26%
Blank	12830	64.58%
Gay Man	38	0.19%
Gay Woman / Lesbian	27	0.14%
Heterosexual / Straight	6218	31.30%
Prefer Not To Say	702	3.53%
Total	19867	100.00%

Use of Support Services

Language line calls	Total calls
Albanian	0
Arabic	0
Bengali	0
Cantonese	0
Chinese	0
Czech	0
Farsi	6
French	0
Hindi	0
Korean	0
Kurdish	0
Latvian	0
Lithuanian	0
Mandarin	19
Polish	9
Portuguese	0
Punjabi	0
Russian	0
Serbian	0
Slovak	0
Sorani	0
Somali	0
Spanish	0
Swahili	1
Tamil	0
Thai	0
Tigrinya	0
Turkish	0
Urdu	0
Total	35

BSL Interpreters	6
Face to Face Interpreters (other language)	4

Satisfaction Information from Annual Survey 2013

		Response rate	Satisfaction with overall services	Satisfaction with home	Satisfaction with neighbourhood	Satisfaction that rent and service charges are VFM	Satisfaction with opportunities to participate	Satisfaction with views are taken into account
	Total responses	1266	88.70%	87.50%	87.30%	85.60%	73.60%	73.90%
Ethnicity	BME	1215	80.77%	64.29%	67.86%	71.43%	60.71%	73.74%
	Non BME	28	89.09%	88.13%	87.67%	85.91%	73.73%	67.86%
Gender	Male	629	91.23%	85.78%	86.31%	83.20%	74.12%	72.52%
	Female	637	86.28%	89.12%	88.17%	87.96%	72.70%	74.88%
Disability	Yes	528	91.01%	90.29%	89.73%	88.89%	74.81%	76.67%
	No	730	87.15%	85.44%	85.32%	83.49%	72.40%	71.11%
Age	under 25	4	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	25.00%
	25-55	260	79%	75.49%	74%	68.34%	62.26%	59.53%
	Over 55	999	91.14%	91.13%	90.95%	89.97%	75.41%	77.72%

Employee Information as at 31 March 2013

		% of company employees	% of Board members	% of top five per cent earners	% of new employees	% of employees ending their employment
Ethnicity	Total count	322				
	BME	3.73%	14%	0	0	6.25%
	Non BME	96.27%	86%	100%	100%	93.75%
Gender	Male	42.24	53%	73.68	33.33	56.25
	Female	57.76	47%	26.32	66.67	43.75
	Not known	0		0		
Age	under 25	5.90		0		
	25-39	31.99	20%	31.58	100	50
	40-49	22.98	47%	52.64		18.75
	50-59	27.33	33%	15.78		6.25
	60-74	11.80				25
	75+	0				
	Not Known	0				
Disability	Yes	11.18				9.38
	No	88.82			100	90.62
	Not known	0				

		% of company employees	% of Board members	% of top five percent earners	% of new employees	% of employees ending their employment
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual	0.62	Not collected			
	Gay man	0.31				
	Gay woman/lesbian	0				
	Heterosexual/Straight	57.14		73.68	83.34	62.50
	Prefer not to say	5.90		10.53	16.66	12.5
	Not known	36.03		15.79		25
Religion or Belief	Buddhist		Not collected			
	Christian	45.34		47.36	33.33	40.62
	Hindu					
	Humanist					
	Jewish					
	Muslim	0.31				
	Sikh	0.31				
	Other	0.93			33.33	6.25
	No religion	20.19		21.06	33.33	15.63
	Prefer not to say	12.11		15.79		15.63
Not known	20.81		15.79		21.87	