



The Gateshead Housing Company Resources Committee

Tuesday 9 September 2014 at 10am
Whickham Room, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street,
Gateshead

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 6 May 2014
4.	Matters Arising
	<u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>
5.	Management Accounts – First Quarter 2014/15 (Pages 7-25) Report of Head of Corporate Services
6.	Sickness Absence and HR Update (Pages 26-38) Report of Support Services Manager
7.	Investors in People (IiP) Accreditation and Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award (Pages 39-42) Report of Support Services Manager

Contact: Stuart Gibson Tel: (0191) 433 5308 Date: 2 September 2014

Item	Business
8.	Health and Safety Update (Pages 43-48) Report of Support Services Manager
9.	Equality and Diversity – Update (Pages 49-53) Report of Involvement and Diversity Manager
10.	Review of ISO 14001 (Pages 54-56) Report of Support Services Manager
11.	Items for Future Agendas
12.	Date and Time of Next Meeting The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 4 November 2014 at 10am in the Whickham Room, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead
13.	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 the indicated categories of the company's Access to Information Rules



The Gateshead Housing Company

Working with Gateshead Council

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

6 May 2014

PRESENT:

Directors

John Hamilton (Chair)
 Sheila Bouitieh
 Robert Buckley
 George Clark
 Joachim Moussouanda Mouanda

Advisers

Jon Mallen-Beadle	Managing Director
Neil Bouch	Director of Customers and Communities
Kevin Johnson	Head of Customer Services
Jennifer Aston	Support Services Manager
Louise Taylor	Involvement and Diversity Manager
Stuart Gibson	Governance and Risk Officer

Apologies

Mick Davison
 Kathryn Ferdinand
 Paul Foy

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were declared.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 25 February 2014 were approved as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Management Accounts – Third Quarter 2013/14

A breakdown of the reasons for the increased cost of insurance claims has been sent to all members of the committee.

(b) Health and Safety Update

It was noted that the Tyne and Wear Fire Service has no intentions at the moment to not attend lift entrapments and don't expect organisations to have methods in place to deal with them themselves.

4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

A draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2013/14 was submitted. The report summarises key activities undertaken to provide a public account of how the Company is progressing equality and diversity for tenants, leaseholders, employees and stakeholders. The report also supports the Company's compliance with the equality duty.

RESOLVED – (i) That the draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2013/14 be approved.

(ii) That the report be designed and made available on the Company's website and be issued on request.

5 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – FOURTH QUARTER 2013/14

The committee received an update on the management accounts for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2013/14 including the income and expenditure in relation to both revenue and repairs.

An overall deficit of £95,000 for the year ended 31 March 2014 is forecast, subject to the external audit work to be carried out by KPMG. The £95,000 can be covered by the Company's reserves which stood at £921,000 at the start of the financial year.

The Management Accounts revenue shows a surplus for the year of £337,000. This is mainly due to an increase in income received for the rent and income performance fee, which has increased by £109,000 for the year, from the budgeted figure of £650,000 to £759,000 and by savings made in the salary budget during the year by not filling some vacant posts.

This increased income is partly offset by an increase in expenditure in relation to overhead costs which are £627,000 over budget at the fourth quarter.

This is mainly due to a significant increase in the cost of insurance claims, where spend is at £342,000 for the fourth quarter compared to an annual budget of only £200,000 and a payment of £118,963 for Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) fees. £77,622 of the CRC charges relate to 2012/13 fees which were not recharged from the Council last year and for which there is no budget provision. In addition, the Company has paid a further £41,341 relating to 2013/14 CRC charge.

The overall position for repairs at the end of the fourth quarter is an overspend of £432,000. The actual spend on repairs this year has been £21.2million compared to the budgeted spend of £19.1million.

The Council has provided additional capital funding of £0.7 million and additional revenue funding of £0.7 million, hence the year end position being an over spend of £432,000 on repairs. The two areas of the budget that have produced this additional cost are responsive repairs and voids.

RESOLVED – That the financial management of the revenue and repairs budgets for the fourth quarter of the 2013/14 financial year and for the year overall be noted.

6 SICKNESS ABSENCE AND HR UPDATE

The committee received an update on general human resources initiatives and developments including sickness absence and learning and development from April 2013 to March 2014.

The total sickness absence for the period equates to 8.58 days per person compared to 7.67 days for the same period last year which is an increase of 10.61%.

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 3.10 days per person and long term absence was 5.48 days. This compares with 3.34 days short term absence and 4.34 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents a reduction of 7.74% in short term absence and an increase of 20.80% in long term absence.

The biggest cause of absence was post operation recovery with 756 days lost compared to 420 days lost last year. This is an increase of 44%.

Stress related absence was 630 days for the period compared to 918 days for the same period last year. This equates to a 45% reduction.

418 days of stress related absence was reported as non-work related stress. This equates to 66% as non-work related absence and 34% work related absence.

Since 2006/7, the Company has consistently reduced sickness absence every year. The increase this year is attributed to long term absence as employees recover from operations. However, the Company has continued to reduce short term absence, stress related absence and the numbers of occasions of absence.

The company has held 25 short term and 21 longer term sickness absence review meetings in the period. Eight first written cautions were issued and one second written caution was issued following a short term absence review meeting.

The financial cost of sickness absence to the Company for the period was £289,476 as compared to £264,699 for the same period last year.

The committee received details of the NE Health and Wellbeing Award, the entry for a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Engagement and Wellbeing Award and details of other HR initiatives and developments.

Following relocation to the Civic Centre, the Company has reviewed its approach to the management of environmental issues as most of the activity required to achieve the standard is no longer within its control. The Company remains keen to follow the environmental policy and maintain the principles that have been established through the working group.

The cost of accreditation, valid for three years is £1,600, with each annual audit inspection £2,500 per year. It was proposed therefore to let the ISO14001 accreditation lapse in June 2014 which would also result in a financial saving of

£9,100 over three years. The Company would continue to monitor its performance against the ISO principles through the working group and continue to implement best practice.

The decommissioning of Keelman House is progressing well and the building is expected to be empty by the end of April 2014. Additional work carried out by the Company's Administration Team has resulted in a substantial reduction from the initial forecast of dilapidations submitted by the Landlord. Subsequently, a £49,000 saving has been agreed with the Landlord's representative.

The committee also received details of health and safety and ICT training during the period.

RESOLVED – (i) That the sickness absence and human resources update be noted.

(ii) That the decision to let ISO 14001 lapse in June 2014 be endorsed.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The committee received an update in the following health and safety activities for the period January to March 2014: -

- Partners activity
- Accident reporting
- Asbestos management
- Fire safety management
- Legionella control
- Fire alarm systems and sprinkler system
- Emergency lighting
- Wet and dry riser tests and inspections
- Bin chute fire shute off tests and inspections
- Cyclical repair and maintenance
- Lift maintenance
- Company construction related activities
- Health and safety legislation

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

8 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, 9 September 2014 at 10am in the Whickham Room, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead

9 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 Category 1 of the Company's Access to Information Rules.



Report to Resources Committee

9 September 2014

Title: Management Accounts – First Quarter 2014/15

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 2014/15.

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 spend at year end. This report has been included in the Appendix to this report.
3. The Board agreed the budget for 2014/15 at its meeting on 20 March 2014.

Management Accounts

4. The Council agreed to pay the company fees totalling £34.217m for the 2014/15 financial year. This consists of £13.206million for the Management Fee, £1million for the Company to manage the capital programme and £20.011million for the repairs fee (£18.011million from HRA Revenue and £2million from HRA Capital).
5. The Company has also budgeted to receive £208,145 income in 2014/15 in relation to management fees for ECO works, new build management fees, management fees for managing other properties and some miscellaneous income.
6. The total revenue budget for 2014/15 is therefore £14.414m and the repairs budget £20.011m.
7. As detailed in the budget report, the proposed budget, similar to the prior year, includes a review of current vacancies. We have removed costs associated with some of our current vacant posts that we do not expect to fill to enable the budget to balance.

8. We have not currently included any pay awards on salaries and have agreed with the council that further discussions will take place if a pay increase is agreed later in the year.
9. The 2014/15 repairs fee has been agreed as an overall increase on the 2013/14 fee. It reflects the 2% savings proposed in the Mears tender plus an increased fee for responsive repairs and voids expenditure. Fees for work with LES and other contractors have remained at 2013/14 levels.
10. The Management Accounts for the first quarter of the financial year 2014/15 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 2014.
11. The Management Accounts Revenue shows a surplus for the first quarter of £214,000. This is due to an increase in income from properties owned by TGHC, slippage on vacant posts and overhead budgets where spend will not be realised until later in the year.
12. The £128,000 under spend on employee costs is mainly due to slippage on vacant posts. Some of these posts were dependant on the company receiving funding to carry out ECO works however, as we currently believe it is unlikely future ECO funding will be secured, we are forecasting that these posts will remain vacant. The corresponding expected income has also been removed.
13. The overhead costs are under budget by £106,000 to the first quarter. This is mainly due to budgets that are traditionally not spent until later in the year and lower utility bills during the summer months. We are forecasting that overheads will come in £20,000 over budget for the year due to increased costs being incurred at Keelman House, prior to it being handed back to the landlord, and an increase in the company's contribution to the community fund.
14. At the year end, we are forecasting that the revenue budget will have a surplus of £21,000 overall. Income is expected to be under budget as the management fee for ECO works is unlikely to be received however this will be offset by reduced expenditure in the Asset and Investment Team in relation to not filling posts that were to manage the works.
15. The overall position for repairs at the end of the first quarter is an under spend of £416,000. Although the position at the end of the first quarter would suggest that spend is reducing since last year, there are still some areas of concern within the budget and we are currently forecasting to be overspent by £531,000 by the end of the financial year.
16. Prelims paid to Mears are expected to come in over budget due to unrealised efficiency savings on behalf of Mears and, despite control measures put in place to slow down and hold back some elements of planned responsive repairs, the responsive repairs budget is still over spent by £48,000 in the first quarter which is concerning with the winter months still to come when traditionally we would expect repair requests to increase.

17. Although relets are currently underspent by £145,000, we are forecasting that spend will come in on budget by the year end. The numbers of orders raised for vacant properties continues to rise and is now at 409 in the first quarter compared to 295 for the same period last year. In addition, the number of vacant properties continues to rise and now stands at 547 compared to 320 at this point last year. Once works are completed in relation to all of these properties, we are expecting the current budget surplus to reduce. Increases in relation to voids and relets continues to be due to the impact of welfare reform changes on tenancy terminations.

Link to values

18. This report is in line with the following values of the company :-

- Being honest, accountable and transparent
- Being motivated, trained and committed

Impact on tenants

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

Risk Management Implications

10. Regular and accurate monitoring will ensure that the strategic risk within the business plan (insufficient available financial resources) is effectively controlled.
11. 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

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

Health Implications

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

Equality and Diversity Implications

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

Value for Money implications

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

Environmental Implications

16. 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

17. None directly for this report.

Recommendations

18. 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 2014/15 financial year.

Contact: Natalie Hewitt, Head of Corporate Services

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**The Gateshead Housing Company
Management Accounts – June 2014**

Revenue and Repairs Executive Summary

1. The management accounts for the first quarter of the 2014/15 financial year are shown below:

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Year End Variance Forecast £'000
Management Fee					
Income	3,583	3,603	(20)	14,414	(81)
Employee Costs	2,227	2,355	128	9,421	122
Overhead Costs	1,142	1,248	106	4,993	(20)
Surplus/(Deficit)	214	0	214	0	21
Repairs Fee					
Repairs Management Fee	4,507	4,507	0	18,011	(100)
Capitalisation	287	500	(213)	2,000	100
Insurance Funded Repairs	17	0	17	0	69
Repairs Costs	4,395	5,007	612	20,011	(600)
Surplus/(Deficit)	416	0	416	0	(531)
Overall Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	630	0	630	0	(510)

2. The overall surplus at the end of the first quarter is £630,000.
3. The revenue budget to the first quarter shows a surplus of £214,000. The surplus is mainly due to slippage on vacant posts and overhead budgets that traditionally have low levels of spend during the first quarter.
4. The repairs budget is underspent at the end of the first quarter by £416,000, however Mears responsive repairs are already over budget despite the measures put in place to slow down or hold back some elements of planned work. The number of voids currently in Mears possession continues to grow and once all of these jobs have been completed they will reduce the current surplus.

Income

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Year End Variance Forecast £'000
INCOME					
Management Fee	3,302	3,302	0	13,206	0
Officer Costs	250	250	0	1,000	0
ECO Management Fee	0	29	(29)	114	(114)
New Build Management Fee	13	13	0	51	0
Management Fee from External Bodies	8	8	0	33	0
Gardening Service Income	1	0	1	2	0
Feed in Tariffs	0	0	0	2	0
TGHC Properties Rent	8	0	8	0	31
Solicitors Packs	1	0	1	2	2
Laundry Income	0	1	(1)	4	0
Total Income	3,583	3,603	(20)	14,414	(81)

5. Overall income for the first quarter is under target by £20,000. This is due to being unable to secure any grant funding to carry out ECO works and therefore not receiving a management fee for managing the works. This has been partly offset by rental income being received for properties owned by The Gateshead Housing Company that was not budgeted for. We are forecasting this rental income will be £31,000 for the year.
6. The Management Fee is in relation to the everyday management of Gateshead Council's properties. The historical Management Fee and the RAIT Performance Fee have now been amalgamated into one Management Fee with an overall reduction of 2.83%.
7. 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 6% of the overall capital programme.
8. The ECO management fee was in relation to grant funding secured in order to carry out ECO works at properties throughout the borough. Due to changes made to ECO funding by Central Government, this has more difficult to secure and funding has been reduced or removed completely, therefore we are taking a prudent view by forecasting that none will be received this year.
9. The New Build Management Fee relates to the fee paid by Keelman Homes for managing the development of its new build properties throughout Gateshead. The fee was based on 5% of the value of the build, however, should the build costs change during the year, then the level of income will also be subject to change.

10. 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 Keelman Homes and another local housing provider.
11. The 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 Handyman service to undertake grass cutting and other gardening services for the homeless section properties. The income is currently greater than budget however the service does not operate in the winter months so will come in on budget for the year.
12. The Feed in Tariff income relates to income we receive for the electricity generated by the photovoltaic panels on the 3 new build properties at High Lanes.
13. The TGHC properties rent income relates to rent and service charge income received for the 8 properties that are owned by The Gateshead Housing Company.
14. The Solicitors Pack income is in relation to information provided to solicitors by our Leasehold Services Team whenever a leasehold property is sold or mortgaged. Due to the increase in Right To Buy applications we have seen an increase in the number of sales so far this year and have forecasted that the income will double to around £4,000 by the year end.
15. The Laundry income relates to the coin operated washing machines and dryers based at Warwick Court. The actual income is currently under budget however we expect it to come in on budget by the year end.

Staff Costs

16. Staff Costs are broken down as follows:

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Year End Variance Forecast £'000
Employee Costs					
Customer Services	701	749	48	2,996	5
Neighbourhood Services - HQ	240	240	0	961	1
Investment & Development Services	183	240	57	960	112
Neighbourhood Services - areas	697	712	15	2,848	3
Customers and Communities Sub Total	1,821	1,941	120	7,765	121
Corporate Services	406	414	8	1,656	1
Total Employee Costs	2,227	2,355	128	9,421	122

17. 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.
18. When the budget was set it was assumed that no pay increase would be awarded in 2014/15. However we have agreed with the council that further discussions will take place should any pay increase be agreed at a later date.
19. The Customer Services section is currently underspent by £48,000. This is mainly due to a vacant post within the repairs team pending completion of the restructure. This committee approved the recruitment of temporary posts in the Lettings and Voids Team at its meeting on the 6 May 2014 and once these posts are filled the surplus will reduce.
20. There is an under spend of £57,000 in the Investment and Development Services section. This is mainly due to vacant posts that were budgeted for to manage the ECO works. These posts were dependent on the ECO grant funding being secured and as funding now looks uncertain, the posts are held as vacant.
21. There is an underspend on staffing in Neighbourhood Services – areas due to vacant posts at the Birtley and Wrekenton Offices and maternity leave at the Felling Office.
22. Corporate Services is also currently under spent by £8,000 due to vacant posts within the Health & Safety, Performance and Communications teams.

23. During the first quarter we incurred agency costs of £14,000, this is a decrease on the same period in 2013/14 when expenditure was £22,000. The spend on agency staff so far this year has been offset in the month end figures due to a number of vacant posts being held.
24. The agency staff costs relate to a post in the Repairs - Surveyors Team to cover maternity leave and to cover vacant posts in the Communications and HR & Admin Teams.

Overhead Costs

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Year End Variance Forecast £'000
Overhead Costs					
Customers and Communities HQ Total	55	71	16	286	0
Corporate Services Total	848	920	72	3,680	(13)
Customers and Communities Area Costs	239	257	18	1,027	(7)
Total Overhead Costs	1,142	1,248	106	4,993	(20)

25. Overhead costs are underspent at the first quarter. This is mainly due to costs not yet being incurred. We are forecasting that this budget will be overspent by £20,000 at year end, which will be offset by the forecasted underspend on salary costs.
26. An analysis of overhead spend against budget is included within Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows a pie chart of areas on which the HQ Overheads have been spent.
27. 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 monitors all areas of spend and ensure that costs are effectively controlled. It should be noted that not all costs are fully controllable, especially those in relation to utilities and insurance claims. Finance monitors these costs on a monthly basis and highlights to the Management Team any areas causing concern.
28. The current under spend within the Corporate Services section is due to low spend on some budgets which traditionally don't spend until later in the year. The main areas are training, which incurs spend when employees begin qualification courses at the start of the new academic year, communications and tenant involvement.
29. We are forecasting a slight over spend of £13,000 for Corporate Services by the year end due to unforeseen costs incurred at Keelman House prior to handing it back to the landlord. These costs include NNDR and utility bills. We have also made an increased contribution to the community fund compared to the amount

that was included in the budget. We would expect to be able to bring these areas of spend within budget by the year end.

30. The current underspend on Customer and Communities is mainly due to utility costs being under budget, however this is expected during the summer months and we expect the costs to increase during the winter months. We are forecasting the Customers and Communities budgets to be £7,000 overspent at the year end due to additional building cleaning ordered by the Council's Care Call section for sheltered schemes that do not currently have an on-site warden.

Repairs Summary

31. The repairs budget was set with all Mears budgets reduced by a 2% efficiency saving as agreed in the repairs tender. The Mears responsive repairs and Mears relets budgets have both been increased compared to last year's budget in response to current pressures. All other budgets have remained at the same level as 2013/14.

32. An analysis of the repairs costs is provided below:

	YTD Actual £000's	YTD Budget £000's	YTD Variance £000's	Annual Budget £000's	Year End Variance Forecast £'000
REPAIRS					
Fixed Costs (Contractors' Prelim's)	1,194	1,093	(101)	4,370	(408)
Responsive - Mears	1,195	1,125	(70)	4,500	(192)
Responsive - LES	175	238	63	950	0
Responsive - Mears Specialist	1	125	124	500	0
Responsive - External Specialist	20	56	36	225	0
Responsive - Others	7	25	18	100	0
Relets - Mears	953	1,098	145	4,390	0
Relets - Other	70	97	27	386	0
Cyclical Repairs - Servicing	100	88	(12)	350	0
Cyclical Repairs - Remedial Works	0	25	25	100	0
Water Hygiene Testing	7	38	31	150	0
Painting	115	175	60	700	0
Gas Servicing	460	480	20	1,918	0
Electrical Circuit Testing	32	25	(7)	100	0
Solid Fuel Testing	0	1	1	2	0
Lift Maintenance	20	25	5	100	0
Security	15	25	10	100	0
Environmental Works	5	56	51	225	0
Energy Performance Certificates	4	11	7	45	0
Aids & Adaptations	22	38	16	150	0
Software Development	0	13	13	50	0
Repairs Contingency	0	150	150	600	0
Expenditure TOTAL	4,395	5,007	612	20,011	(600)
Insurance Funded Repairs	17	0	17	0	69
Capitalisation	287	500	(213)	2,000	100
Repair Management Fee Income	4,507	4,507	0	18,011	(100)
Income Total	4,811	5,007	(196)	20,011	69
REPAIRS TOTAL	416	0	416	0	(531)

Overall Summary

33. The repairs budget is underspent at the end of the first quarter by £416,000 however this is unlikely to continue and we are forecasting a £531,000 overspend by year end. We are prudently forecasting that all budgets underspent at the end of the first quarter will come in on budget at the year end.

34. We are currently forecasting that spend in relation to fixed costs will be £408,000 over budget due to unrealised efficiencies by Mears, however discussions are currently ongoing regarding potential changes to pension contributions which may mitigate this.
35. We are also forecasting that the Mears responsive repairs budget will be £192,000 over spent at the year end based on spend in the first quarter and repairs spend traditionally increasing during the winter months.

Responsive Repairs

36. 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.
37. To reflect operational delivery and to allow for closer monitoring of the budgets, we have split the repairs other costs budget into three smaller budgets:
 - Mears Specialist Works - for one-off larger jobs and batched work passed to Mears
 - External Specialist Works - for asbestos work and any other subcontractors used to provide specialist work (that Mears do not have the ability to carry out)
 - Responsive Other - for the repairs freephone number, postage for postcards/letters and removal and accommodation costs incurred due to repair works
38. There have been 11,931 repair orders invoiced to the end of the first quarter and the average repair cost for the period was £87.36. This compares to 15,306 invoiced repairs, at an average cost of £102.11 for the same period 2013/14.
39. Measures were introduced in December 2013 to attempt to reduce and control expenditure on responsive repairs with Mears. Planned works are being batched and not immediately released to Mears and work to garages and externals are being held back in most cases. These measures have helped to reduce the number of jobs and average cost, however further reductions would be required to bring spend in line with budget.
40. The Mears Specialist Team has now been disbanded and once all of the outstanding jobs have been completed and invoiced we will be able to move the remainder of this budget to responsive repairs.
41. 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

42. The relet budget is split between the costs of the works carried out by Mears and the other costs associated with relets. Other costs mainly relate to costs associated with asbestos works, security costs and decoration vouchers provided to new tenants.

43. Mears relet costs are under budget at the first quarter however the number of void properties has continued to increase due to the impact of Welfare Reform. We currently have 547 void properties compared to 320 at this point last year. This large increase in the number of voids is putting pressure on Mears to complete the works and we would expect that once the backlog of jobs has been completed and invoiced the budget will no longer be underspent. There were 375 properties let to the end of the first quarter, compared to 427 for the same period in 2013/14.
44. 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.
45. The average relet cost for jobs completed and invoiced to the first quarter was £2,206.78 and the number of relets invoiced to the first quarter was 344. At the first quarter of 2013/14, 405 jobs had been invoiced at an average cost of £2,453.14.
46. In some areas of the borough, where we have multiple vacant properties and demand for these properties is low, we have taken the decision to slow down relet works until the properties that are currently ready to let have been let.

Painting

47. The painting programme budget is under spent by £60,000 to the first quarter. There is a programme in place based on the budgeted figure which Mears are currently working to therefore we would expect this programme to be complete and the budget to spend by the year end.

Gas Servicing

48. Gas servicing is under budget for the first quarter by £20,000 as the number of gas repairs required has been lower during the summer months. We would expect these to increase during the winter months as the weather worsens and the current underspend to reduce. This budget also includes 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.
49. Gas appliances are required to have a gas service carried out every 12 months. At the end of the first quarter, 99.91% of properties had a gas service within the previous 12 months. 15 properties were out of date by 1 to 4 weeks and 1 property was out of date by 4 to 8 weeks.

Cyclical Maintenance

50. There are a number of repair costs in relation to the cyclical maintenance programme which have 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.
51. The electrical circuit testing budget is currently overspent by £7,000, however there is programme in place for the year based on the budgeted amount and therefore we would expect spend to come in on budget by year end.

52. The environmental budget is underspent to the end of the first quarter by £51,000. This is due to invoices and details of work carried out not being received from LES. We are continuing to work with LES to improve the information we receive relating to these charges in order to allow the charges to be correctly audited. Once we receive this information we would expect this to come in on budget by the end of the year.

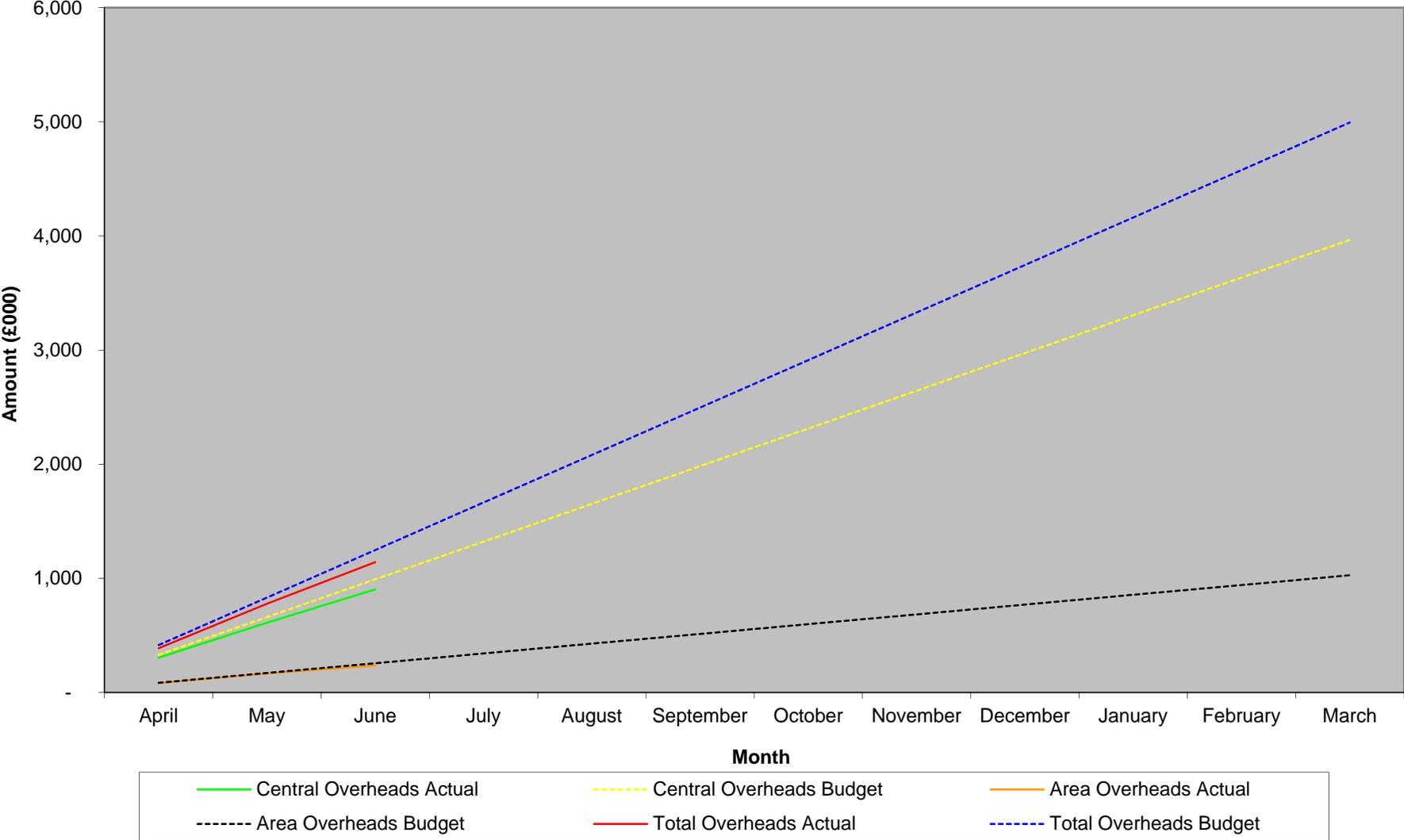
Others

53. The software development budget relates to the contribution from the repairs budget for the purchase of the BARIS interface. The interface will be used to improve the flow of information between Northgate and Mears repairs management system MCM and LES repairs management system TOTAL. We anticipate the interface to go live around October with Mears and later in the year with LES.
54. The repairs contingency budget of £600,000 will be used to increase the available budget for any of the budget headings that are under pressure during the year. Although there is no current spend against this budget we are taking a prudent view and forecasting that the full £600,000 will be spent during the year.

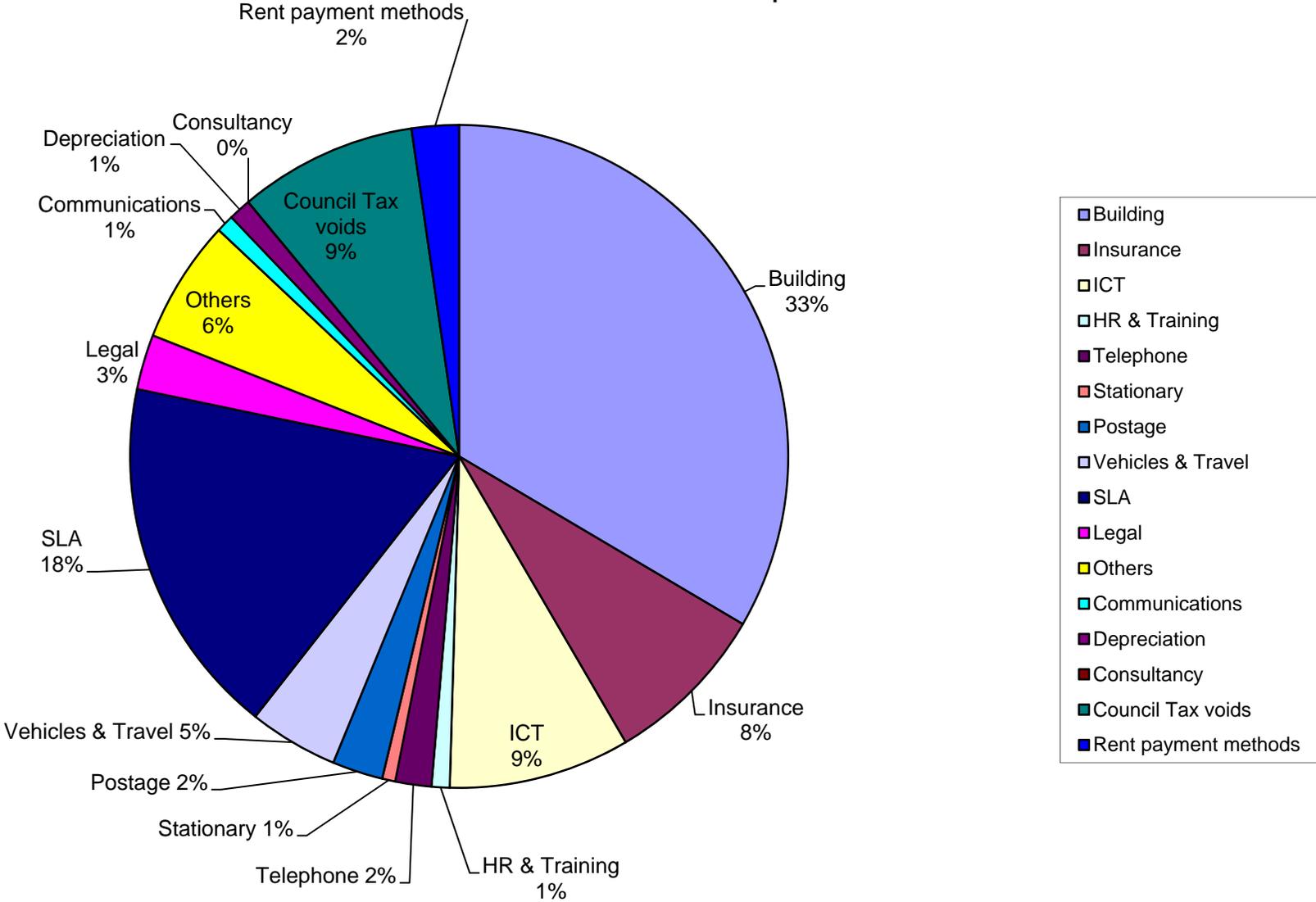
Detailed Management Accounts

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Y/E Variance Forecast £'000
INCOME					
Management Fee	3,302	3,302	0	13,206	0
Officer Costs	250	250	0	1,000	0
ECO Management Fee	0	29	(29)	114	(114)
New Build Management Fee	13	13	0	51	0
Management Fee from external bodies	8	8	0	33	0
Gardening Service Income	1	0	1	2	0
Feed in Tariffs	0	0	0	2	0
TGHC Properties Rent	8	0	8	0	31
Solicitors Packs	1	0	1	2	2
Laundry Income	0	1	(1)	4	0
Total Income	3,583	3,603	(20)	14,414	(81)
Employee Costs					
Customer Services	701	749	48	2,996	5
Neighbourhood Services - HQ	240	240	0	961	1
Investment & Development Services	183	240	57	960	112
Neighbourhood Services - areas	697	712	15	2,848	3
Customers & Communities sub total	1,821	1,941	120	7,765	121
Corporate Services	406	414	8	1,656	1
Total Employee costs	2,227	2,355	128	9,421	122
Overhead Costs					
Customers and Communities HQ	55	71	16	286	0
Corporate Services	848	920	72	3,680	(13)
Customers and Communities Area	239	257	18	1,027	(7)
Total Overhead Costs	1,142	1,248	106	4,993	(20)
Surplus/(Deficit)	214	0	214	0	21
Repairs Fee					
Repairs Management Fee	4,507	4,507	0	18,011	(100)
Capitalisation	287	500	(213)	2,000	100
Insurance funded repairs	17	0	17	0	69
Repairs Costs	4,395	5,007	612	20,011	(600)
Surplus/(Deficit)	416	0	416	0	(531)
Overall Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	630	0	630	0	(510)

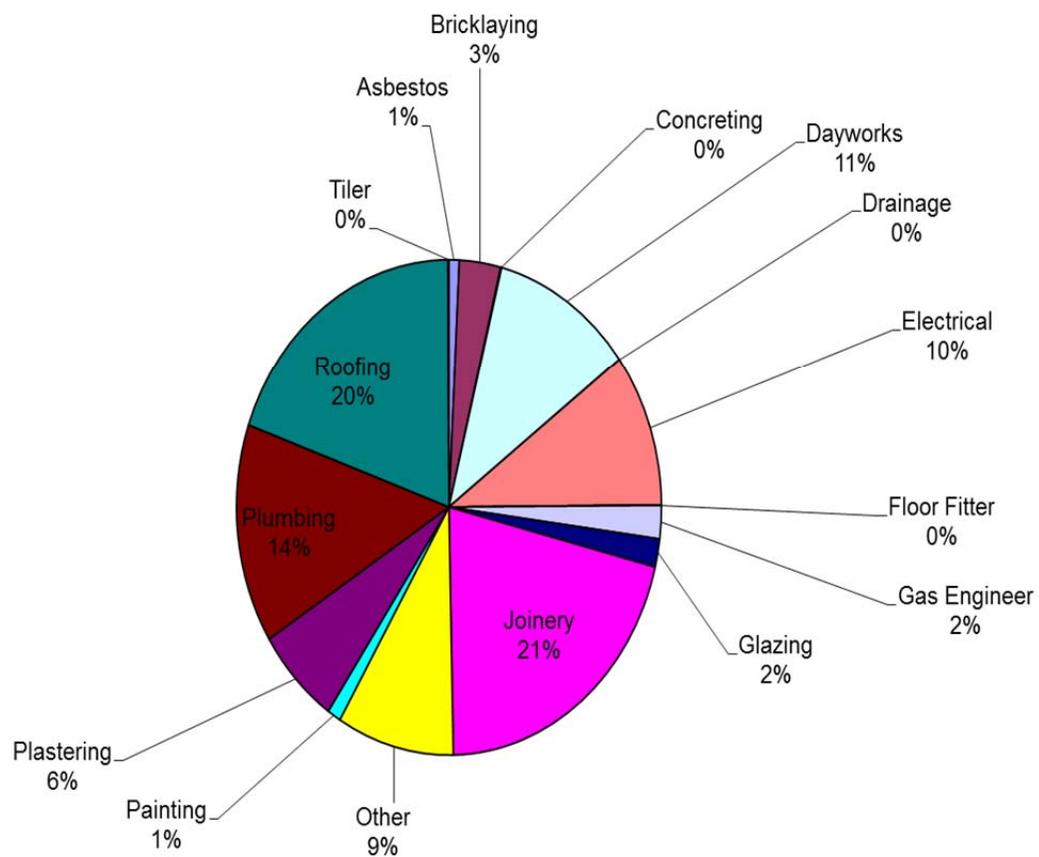
TGHC Overheads Budget 2014/15



Central Overheads expenditure cumulative 30th June 2014

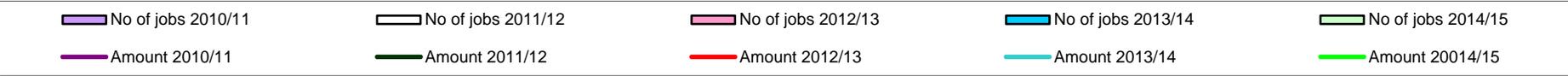
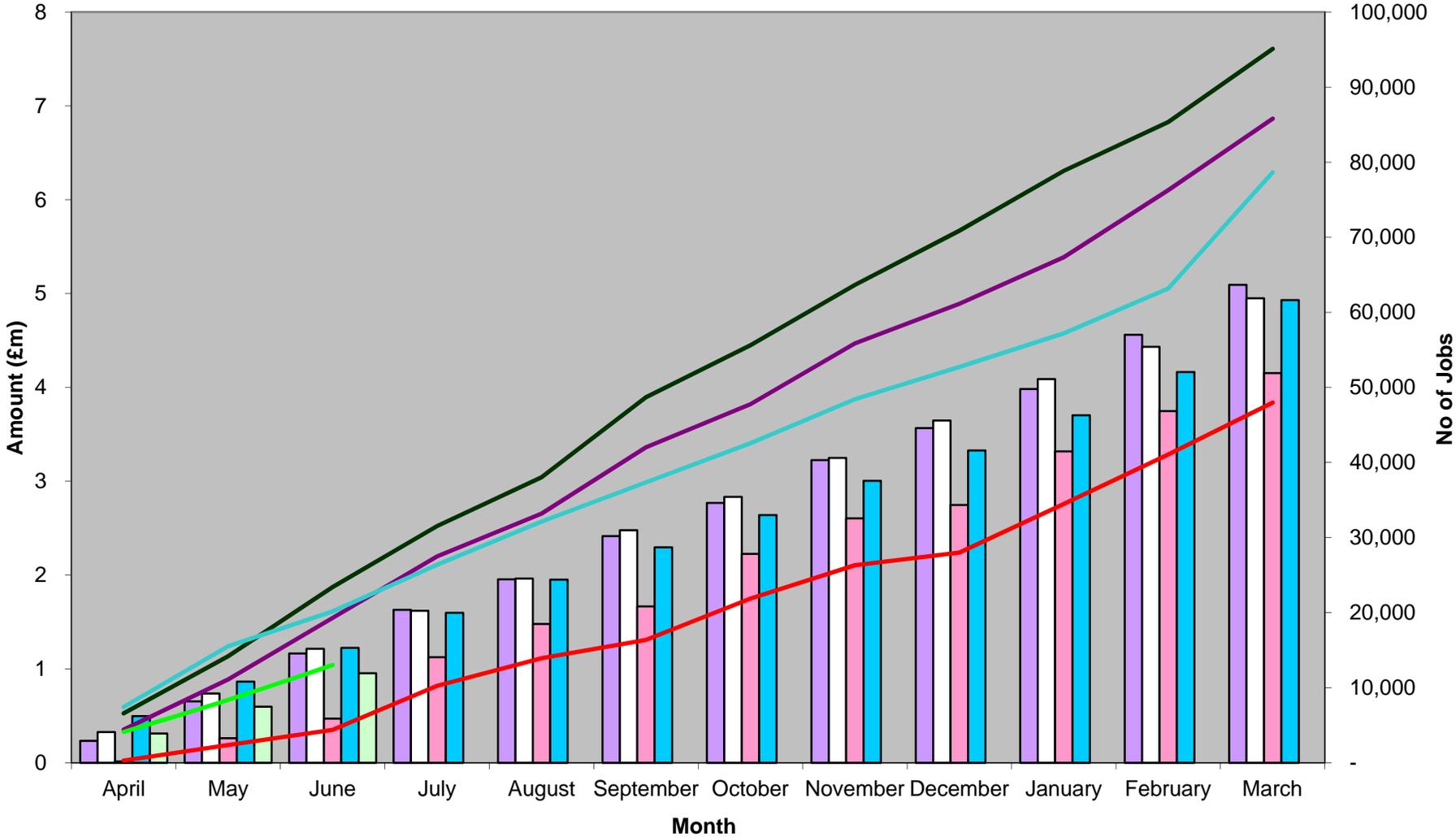


Mears invoiced Repairs by trade for the period April 2014 - March 2015



Trade	2014/15
Asbestos	9,124
Bricklaying	36,797
Concreting	899
Dayworks	126,837
Drainage	118
Electrical	117,818
Floor Fitter	341
Gas Engineer	25,370
Glazing	21,500
Joinery	243,830
Other	104,560
Painting	12,050
Plastering	75,630
Plumbing	167,858
Roofing	229,185
Tiler	987
TOTAL	1,172,905

Comparison of Responsive Repairs to Previous Years





Report to Resources Committee

9 September 2014

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 April to June 2014, including 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.

Sickness Absence Update

3. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of the sickness absence levels for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2014.
4. Appendix 3 provides in a graphical format the reasons for absence within each directorate of the company for the period 1 April to 30 June 2014.
5. In comparing absence between 1 April and 30 June 2014 with the same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred.
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 2.00 days per person compared to 1.63 days for the same period last year which is an increase of 18.50%, although this is significantly better than the final quarter of last year when 3.06 days were lost.
7. 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 0.76 days per person and long term absence was 1.24 days. This compares with 0.83 days short term absence and 0.80 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents a reduction of 8.43% in short term absence and an increase of 35.48% in long term absence.

8. The biggest cause of absence was post operation recovery with 194 days lost compared to 165 days lost last year. This is an increase of 15.07%.
9. Stress related absence was 173 days for the period April to June 2014 compared to 36 days for the same period last year.
10. 85 days of stress related absence was reported as non work related stress. This equates to 48% as non-work related absence and 52% work related absence.
11. Of the 173 days lost to stress related absence, six employees reported non-work related stress and four employees reported work related stress
12. A personal support package continues to be provided to employees who are absent due to stress to include occupational health, occupational therapy, home visits, counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Managing Sickness Absence

13. The company has held 14 sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period 1 April to 30 June 2014. 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.
14. One first written caution was issued and one final written caution was issued following absence review meetings.
15. 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, and reasonable adjustments to the working environment and ill health retirement.
16. 13 absence review meetings were held in line with procedure two in the period 1 April to 30 June 2014.
17. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, five employees attended an occupational health physician's appointment as a result of absence review meetings.
18. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, six cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)/counselling sessions were supported by the company.
19. We continue to work with an Occupational Therapist who specialises in supporting individuals with impaired mental wellbeing. During the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, 37 occupational therapy sessions were supported by the company.
20. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, 13 employees were referred to occupational health for an initial assessment and 17 employees attended an occupational health review.
21. Three employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period 1 April to 30 June 2014.
22. One former employee has been approved ill health retirement.

23. Management information and guidance on managing sickness absence is provided to managers on a monthly basis.

Health and Wellbeing

24. 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.
25. The Company continues to work with Gateshead Council to more closely align our services through sharing information and initiatives.

Other HR initiatives and Developments

26. The Company continues to offer a 'pay day pampers' and chiropody service from the Occupational Health suite at Gateshead Civic Centre. Employees are now offered a wider range of appointment dates and times. We will continue to offer these initiatives off site, subject to demand, whenever possible.

Work Life Balance

27. In the period April to June 2014, the following work life balance applications have been approved:

Number of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
1	Application to reduce working hours

Investigation and Disciplinary

28. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no formal investigations, disciplinaries or appeals.

Grievances

29. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no reported grievances.

Bullying and Harassment

30. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no allegations of bullying or harassment.

Probity (including whistleblowing, bribery, fraud and corruption)

31. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no reported incidents.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

32. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, the Company has advertised nine jobs. One job was ring fenced to company employees, seven were advertised across the Company and Gateshead Council and one advert was external due to no interest internally.

Employment Law Updates

33. Representatives from Human Resources attended a free employment law update in May 2014.
34. The update focussed on recent changes to the employment tribunal procedure, protected conversations and settlement agreements, the introduction of compulsory conciliation via ACAS, the governments National Health and Work Assessment and Advisory Service, changes to the flexible working regulations and new regulations on TUPE.

Child Care Scheme

35. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In June 2014, 10 employees were in the scheme.

Exit Interviews

36. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, six employees left the Company. Of these, four exit interviews were held with an HR Advisor. Two employees declined to attend an exit interview or complete a survey and return it to us in the post.
37. Of the four exit interviews carried out comments indicate:
- Employees enjoyed working for The Gateshead Housing Company
 - Employees indicated they had a good relationship with colleagues and management
 - Employees would return to work for the company in the future

Learning and Development Activity

Investors in People (IiP) Networking Event

38. Representatives from Human Resources attended an event which was organised by the company IiP Assessor. The regular meetings are an opportunity for organisations from all sectors in the region to come together and share best practice. The focus of the recent workshop was reward and recognition.

Investors in People (IiP) Awareness Raising

39. Employees who were randomly selected for interview with the IiP Assessor were invited to an awareness raising session. The session was a relaxed and informal opportunity to ask questions and talk through the interview process.

Interview Skills

40. Two Interview Skills workshops were delivered internally. The two hour sessions focussed on skills and techniques to increase confidence during the interview process.

Health and Safety Training

41. In the period April 2014 to June 2014, the following Health and Safety training has been delivered:

- City and Guilds confined spaces training with 12 building surveyors
- Asbestos training - job specific with the Repairs Team
- Refresher training with fire marshals and first aiders in the use of evac chairs on civic centre escape routes

ICT Training

42. In the period April 2014 to June 2014, the following ICT training has been delivered:

- An Adobe Captivate e-learning session was created to demonstrate how to create Notepad entries correctly within Northgate. This was distributed to all staff via a Team Briefing and raised the importance of notepad entries to ASB cases.
- Throughout the period training guides have been provided to key users within Housing Offices for the Document Management System. The guides detail how to scan and index customer documentation (e.g. housing files, letters) into the Document Management System (DMS) and how to retrieve existing documentation from the Northgate Housing System.

Link to values

43. 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

44. 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

45. Manager's not managing sickness in accordance with the policy has been identified as an operational risk and controls and future actions are in place to mitigate the risk.

46. 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

47. The financial cost of sickness absence to the Company for the period April to March 2014 was £68,358 compared to £54,975 for the same period last year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

48. 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

49. 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

50. The initiatives and prevention work that has been introduced over the past year has had a positive impact on the health of our employees. The clearest measure of this is the achievement of Investors in People (IiP) and Health and Wellbeing Award and the Better Health at Work Award Bronze level.
51. 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 stress.

Environmental Implications

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

Consultation carried out

53. The Company's HR consultants EEF Northern and Trade 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.

Recommendation

54. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the update on HR initiatives and developments.

Contact: Jennifer Aston, Support Services Manager

Tel No: (0191) 433 5388

 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
Number of people employed by TGHC					
Male		137			
Female		182			
Permanent Employees		315			
Temporary Employees		4			
Full Time		257			
Part Time		62			
Number of starters (since 01 April 2014)		0			
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2014)		6			
Ill health retirements		0			
Number of employees seeking redeployment		0			
Diversity Monitoring					
Gender					
Male		137			
Female		182			
Age					
Under 18		0			
18 – 25		18			
26 – 35		95			
36 – 45		80			
46 – 55		78			
56 – 65		44			
66 +		3			
Disability					
Perceived themselves as disabled		35			
Do not perceive themselves as disabled		284			

 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	305				
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	3				
Black or Black British Other	1				
Chinese	1				
Other	0				
Recruitment Monitoring					
Number of BME applicants for posts					
Application for employment	4				
Short listed for interview	3				
Offered post	0				
Number of disabled applicants for posts					
Application for Employment	0				
Short listed for interview	0				
Offered post	0				
HR advisory issues					
Investigations	0				
Disciplinary	0				
Suspensions	0				
No Further Action	0				
Oral Warning	0				
First Written Warning	0				
Final Written Warning	0				
Dismissals	0				
Appeals Submitted	0				
Stage 1 Grievance	0				
Stage 2 Grievance	0				
Capability	0				
Bullying and Harassment	0				

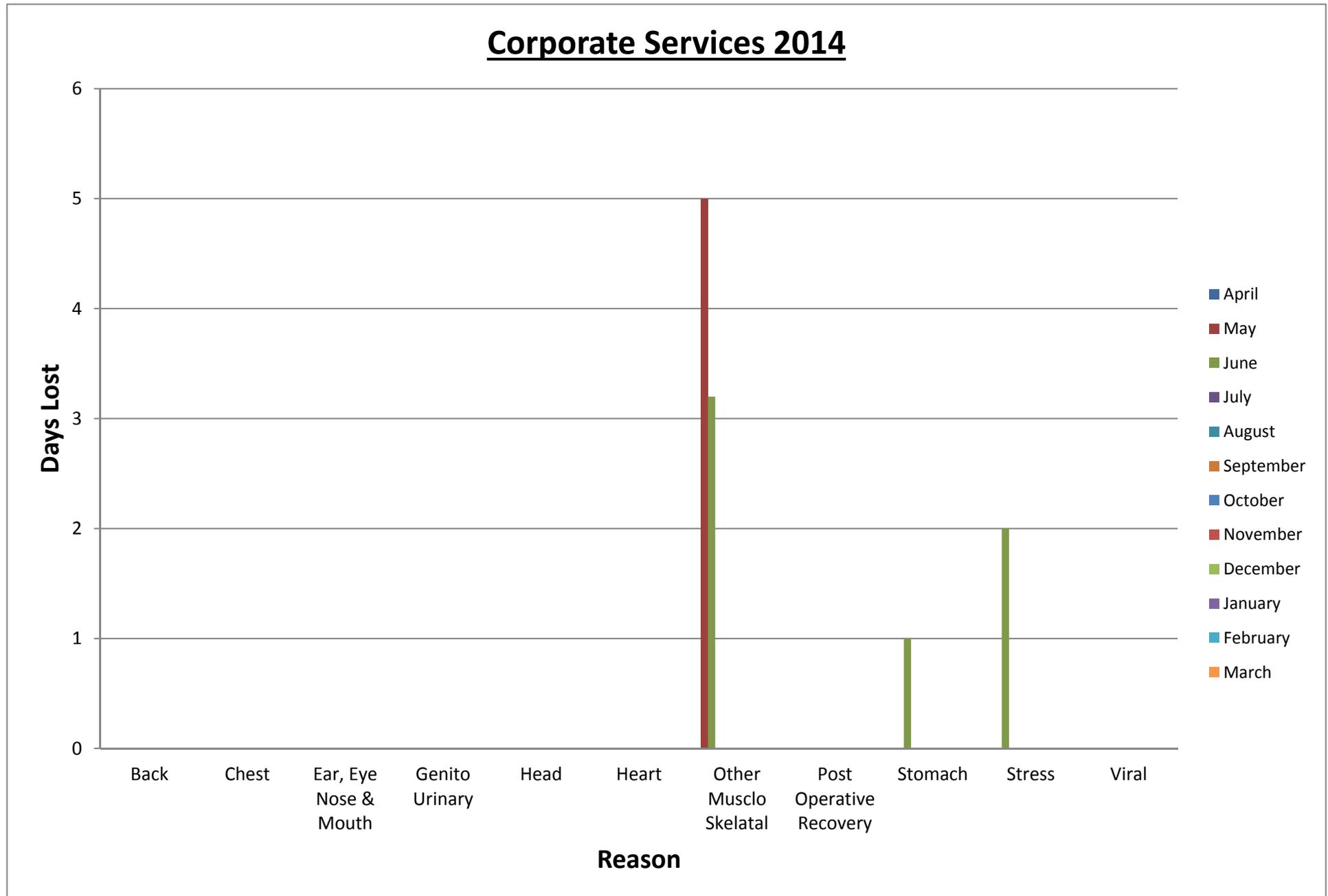
					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14					
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	
Whistleblowing Employment Tribunals	0 0				
Health and Wellbeing					
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April 2014 to March 2015)	2.00				
Total number of working days lost to sickness	592				
Number of Occupational Health appointments	30				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	13 17				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	30 0				
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	43				
Number of Absence Management Reviews	27				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	14 13				
Number of employees who have had a phased return	3				
Learning and Development					
Number of new staff receiving induction	0				
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	13				

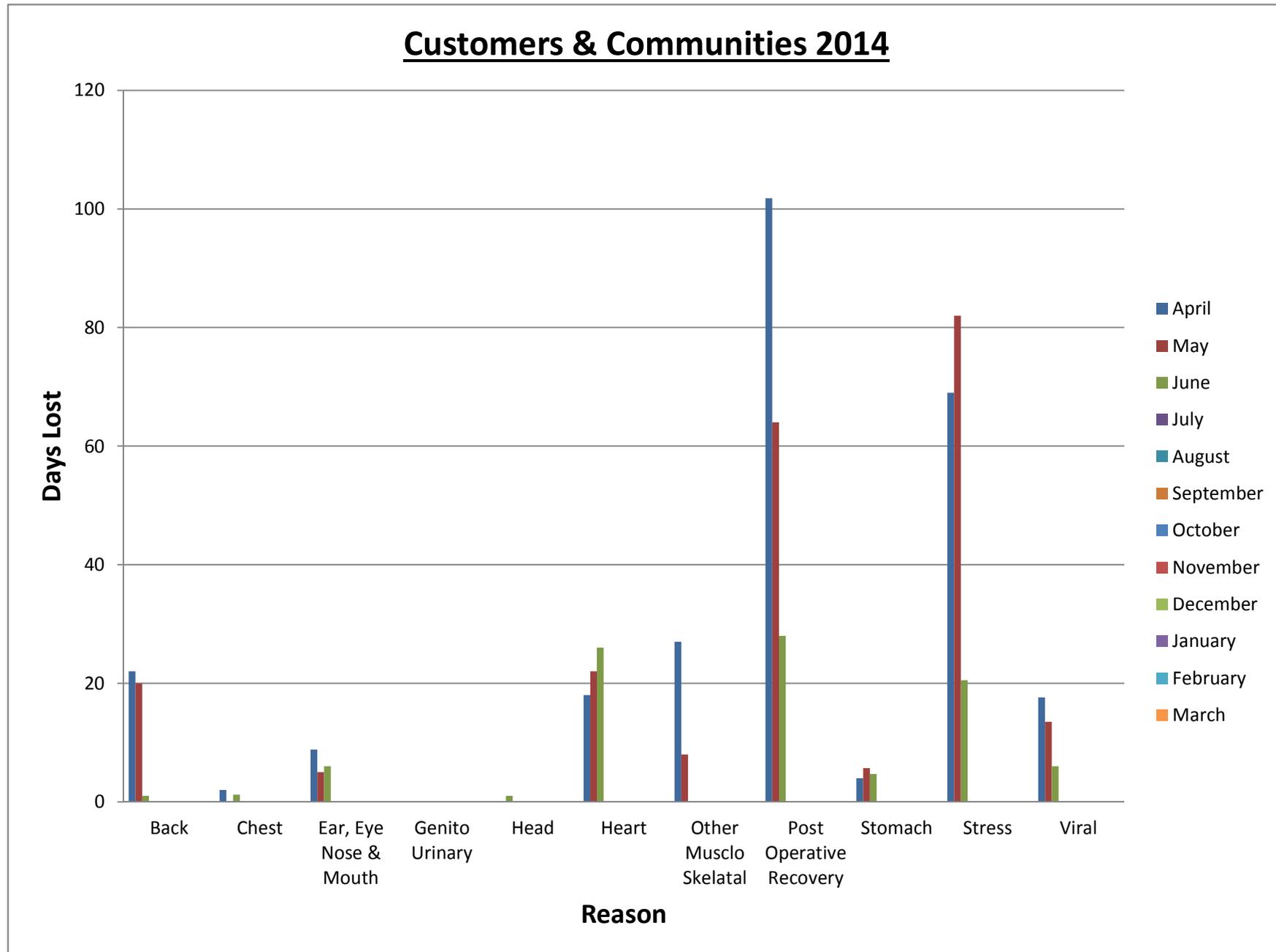
2014/2015	Customers & Communities - Customer Services	Customers & Communities Neighbourhood Services	Customers & Communities Property Services	Corporate Services Finance	Corporate Services Support Services	All employees TGHC	TGHC cumulative	2012/13 TGHC Cumulative	Days Lost per month	Days Lost Short Term Absence	No of Occurrences Short Term	Days Lost Long Term Absence	No of Occurrences Long Term
April	0.44	1.61	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.91	0.91	0.54	270.20	0.25	24.00	0.66	10.00
May	0.65	1.05	0.22	0.29	0.00	0.74	1.65	1.02	220.20	0.29	19.00	0.45	7.00
June	0.49	0.30	0.26	0.36	0.00	0.35	2.00	1.63	101.60	0.22	25.00	0.13	2.00
July													
August													
September													
October													
November													
December													
January													
February													
March													
Cumulative by service area	1.58	2.96	0.61	0.65	0.00	2.00			592.00	0.76	68.00	1.24	19.00

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

BV12

excludes temp employees with <12 months service





Report to Resources Committee

9 September 2014



Title: Investors in People (IiP) Accreditation and Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award

Report of: Support Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To update the committee on the outcome of the Investors in People Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award June 2014.

Background

2. Investors in People launched in 1991 as a business improvement tool, to provide a simple and flexible way for companies to improve their performance through their people.
3. It focuses on putting strategies in place to support the business and its employees, and provides guidance on areas such as people management, leadership, reward and recognition, empowerment, and learning and development.
4. The Gateshead Housing Company was first accredited in 2005, followed by re-accreditation in 2008. A Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award was introduced by Investors in People in 2011. The company's assessment resulted in the achievement of IiP Gold status and Health and Wellbeing in 2011.
5. To maintain the awards, companies must be re-assessed every three years.
6. In preparation, a diagnostic assessment was carried out by our IiP Specialist (Assessor) Lesley Curtis in September 2013. This provided the basis for an action plan which would take the company through to June 2014, and the next assessment.
7. A planning meeting was held in April where four objectives for the assessment were agreed as:
 - To confirm that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award
 - To identify strengths and areas of good practice within the organisation

- To identify any areas for further development for continuous improvement
- To provide feedback on the effectiveness of change management within the company

The Assessment

8. The assessment took place over three days in June 2014.
9. The assessor interviewed 41 employees, across a range of services, selected on the basis of job role, location and length of service, with interviews being a combination of group and individual sessions.
10. Most of the interviews were held at the Civic Centre although the assessor did visit Blaydon Housing Office to speak with some employees.

Outcome of Assessments

11. Initial feedback was verbally provided to the management team at the end of the assessment followed by confirmation in writing.
12. We are pleased to inform the committee that the company achieve liP assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award.

Summary of key findings

13. Initial feedback was verbally provided to the management team at the end of the assessment.

Investors in People Key strengths and areas of good practice

- Understanding of the company values, people are committed to providing excellent services and the majority believe that what they do makes a difference.
- Communication has improved with the introduction of 'Tea Time Talks, core brief, team briefs and the weekly newsletter.
- Constructive relationships with trade unions and a genuine commitment to engage and consult with employees.
- Learning and development opportunities on Wednesday afternoon training sessions
- Different approaches to learning and development: e-learning, on the job, work shadowing, internal courses and external qualifications
- Employees are very positive about the effectiveness of team working and the sharing of knowledge and skills within teams.
- Friendly and supportive culture that encourages team working
- Performance management process

Recommendations and opportunities for development

- Develop a management competency framework to improve people management skills
- Recognise contribution through empowerment of employees to make decisions

- Develop the skills of managers in respect of coaching so they develop the skills and expertise of employees.
- Review the training strategy in light of feedback from liP to maximise resources and to identify core training needs required to meet the business objectives.
- A formal feedback process to be introduced so employees see the results of their contribution to surveys, tea time talks etc.

Health and Wellbeing Good Practice key strengths and areas of good practice

- Excellent opportunities for flexible working and work life balance
- Absence management policy and support available for employees from HR and managers
- Well publicised resources, policies and procedures
- Easy access to occupational health, physiotherapy, counselling and chiropody.
- Access to events and activities to raise awareness of health and wellbeing

Recommendations and opportunities for development

- Enhance the health and wellbeing strategy by aligning other appropriate policies and procedures into the strategy so that health and wellbeing is integral to the business strategy.
- Develop and evaluate key performance indicators to establish the effectiveness or value of initiatives
- Develop health and wellbeing competencies as part of a management performance framework
- Remind employees of the initiatives and support available following co location to the civic centre.

Next steps

14. A continuous improvement plan was provided by the assessor for consideration by the company. The management team and organisational development service will manage the implementation of the actions.
15. It is a requirement of the liP process that the assessor will contact the company after 18 months. The company has discretion as to the form of contact for example to monitor the action plan or deliver a toolbox talk to managers.

Link to values

16. The report links to the following company values:-
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being positive and responsive
 - Being caring and respecting
 - Being motivated, trained, and committed across the company
 - Embracing equality

Impact on Customers

17. Increased employee engagement is proven to reduce sickness absence with employees also providing increased discretionary effort which improves the service provided to our customers.

Risk Management Implications

18. Increased staff turnover can result in the loss of essential knowledge and skills from the organisation

Financial implications

19. The Head of Finance confirms that any costs arising from this report can be met within existing budgets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. There are no equality and diversity implications.

Value for money Implications

21. Value for money principles are embedded and followed in all employee engagement and wellbeing activity.

Health Implications

22. There are no health implications

Environmental Implications

23. There are no environmental implications

Consultation Carried Out

24. No consultation was necessary when compiling this report

Recommendations

25. The committee is asked if they are satisfied with progress against the Investors in People standard and Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award and to receive updates on progress with the action plan.

Report to Resources Committee

9 September 2014



Title: Health and Safety Update

Report of: Support Services Manager

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 2014.

Background

2. The Safety, Health and Environmental Team ("SHE Team") are responsible for a number of activities designed to reduce and mitigate accidents in the workplace and to ensure the 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 ongoing 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 upgrades to DDA standard.
5. The team 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

- Refurbishment and New Build Works.

Partners Activity Update

6. In the period April to June 2014, we have monitored our partner's activities and reviewed all asbestos related incidents and working practices. Repairs works are visited weekly to ensure compliance with policy and procedures and good working practices. We continue to work closely with Mears Safety Advisors for compliance and safe systems of working.
7. During the period April to June 2014 monthly joint Health and Safety site inspections visits have taken place with Mears. The works visited have covered void property refurbishments, gas boiler installations, bathroom adaptations and general repairs.
8. Inspections include a check of operatives understanding of asbestos information, that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn and that dust sheets are used to prevent damage to flooring.
9. There were no significant areas of weakness identified on the site visits. A number of minor recommendations and areas for improvement were identified, including the replacement of identification badges that are damaged within an agreed timescale.

Accident Reporting

Accidents / Incidents near misses TGHC Employees

10. In the period April to June 2014, four non reportable Accidents / Near Misses were reported. There were no reportable accidents under RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Accidents / Incidents near misses to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

11. In the period April to June 2014, there was one non-reportable Accidents / Near Misses reported. There were no reportable accidents under RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Violent Incidents and Warning Alerts

12. In the reporting period April to June 2014, there have been 25 violent incidents. All accidents and reported violent incidents have been investigated and follow up action taken to include a review of safe systems of work.

Asbestos Management

13. Newcastle City Council have a framework in place for asbestos which is currently being used by Gateshead Council for their analytical and consultancy needs in relation to asbestos management. Legal advice has confirmed that the OJEU notice is suitable to cover the Gateshead Housing Company. This will provide a list of companies and fees for us to consider for the delivery of asbestos management and will assist us to implement procedures earlier than planned.

14. The following asbestos surveys have taken place for Refurbishment and Demolition (R&D):
 - 25 surveys for maintaining decency investment works
 - 14 surveys for repairs and maintenance, including gas servicing
 - 21 surveys to void properties and for aids and adaptations.
 - 13 air tests
 - 47 re-inspections of known asbestos containing materials (ACM) in non-domestic buildings
15. During the period April to June 2014, there was one incident reported by a third party that is being investigated by TGHC Health and Safety.

Fire Safety Management

16. Proactive monitoring of our Fire Safety strategy continues to take place through joint working and regular meetings with the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).
17. The work programme for the Sheltered Housing buildings is progressing with several schemes completed during the reporting period.
18. We continue to review and update fire safety arrangements for the Multi and Sheltered Housing Schemes through fire audits and inspection of all buildings.
19. During this reporting period there were no major incidents to report.

Legionella Control

20. In the period April to June 2014, 12 water hygiene audits have been completed. 67 audits are required in a 12 month period.
21. 180 of 189 (95%) of water hygiene inspection treatments have been completed by Local Environmental services (LES).
22. Risk assessments have been completed and action taken to rectify low risk items including hot water warning notices and training and instruction for weekly flushing in multi-storey blocks and APU's.
23. Orders have been placed with LES for work to Sydney Court tanks and tank lid supports at the Barnes Close blocks.
24. A revised code of practice (ACOP L8) came into operation in April 2014. ACOP L8 applies to water hygiene risk assessments in multi-storey blocks, APU's and communal rooms. The code of practice removes the requirement for a 2 year renewal of risk assessments and replaces it with a requirement to review risk assessments if the water system is altered.
25. ACOP L8 places additional responsibilities on building owners as follows:-
 - Water hygiene risk assessments are now a requirement for all dwellings. Trial surveys are planned in quarter two to understand the level of resources required to meet the requirements of the code of practice.

- Weekly flushing of water systems in void properties. We are currently assessing the resource required for compliance.

Fire Alarm Systems and Sprinkler System

26. 30 (100%) quarterly inspections have been carried out to multi storey blocks and sheltered housing communal areas.

Emergency Lighting

27. 186 (100%) inspections have been carried out to emergency lighting systems. This includes inspections carried out at various intervals in accordance with statutory requirements and the agreed delivery programme with Local Environmental Services, to ensure compliance.
28. 32 (100%) of quarterly emergency light invertors (battery checks) have been inspected in the period April to June 2014.

Wet and Dry Riser Tests and inspections

29. Repairs are planned for wet riser pumps in quarter two. Annual pressure tests for dry risers are due in September and October 2014.

Bin Chute Fire Shut Off Tests and Inspections

30. 25 Certificates of Compliance have been issued which are valid until May 2015. There were no activations or repairs required in the period April to June 2014.

Cyclical Repair and Maintenance Update

31. Bi-monthly meetings with Gateshead Council Local Environmental Services and the Gateshead Housing Company are progressing with the monitoring of the delivery of the cyclical maintenance programme. Inspections of fire alarms, emergency lighting systems and dry and wet risers have been completed in line with the maintenance programme.
32. ICT have developed an automated electronic system to facilitate the uploading of maintenance records into the Northgate system.

Lift Maintenance

33. In the period April to June 2014 the following works have been completed:-
- Park, Peareth & Priory Courts - installation of a new lift
 - St Cuthberts Court - DDA upgrade and new control panel
34. The Eslington Court lift replacement is planned to commence in September 2014.
35. In the period April to June 2014 there were no relevant immediate actions in relation to breakdowns, maintenance or repairs reported and there were no entrapments.

Update on the Company Construction Related Activities

36. There are eight construction related projects ongoing with notifications to the HSE.
37. Works are ongoing on seven projects. Planning of a lift refurbishment in Eslington Court is ongoing.
38. Works are ongoing on eight construction related projects involving multiple sites as follows: -
 - Insulation works to non-traditional properties in Leam Lane
 - Maintaining decency works covering various estates across the Borough
 - Planned painting works across various sites
 - Fire safety improvement works to Sheltered Housing across various sites
 - Barnes Close electrical upgrade works
 - Accessibly improvement works on Multi Storey properties across various sites
 - New Build development of 20 homes
39. Minor non-compliances identified during the site visits have been discussed with the Principal Contractors and remedial actions agreed to mitigate the risk from construction related activities.

Update on Health and Safety Legislation Changes

40. The following codes of practice have been reviewed during this reporting period as follows:-
 - Revision of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and Approved Code of Practice. A radical overhaul of the CDM regulations is being consulted on with respondents given until 6 June 2014 to comment on the proposals.
41. Three employees have attended a CDM coordinators course to assist the company in the management of CDM activity.

Review of Health and Safety function future delivery

42. At the July Board Meeting, the Board approved a number of proposals relating to the future delivery of the Health and Safety function.
43. We have been working with the Council to progress these issues and will be providing Resources Committee with an action plan and detailed update at its next meeting.

Links to Values

44. 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

45. 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

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

Financial Implications

47. 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

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

Value for Money Implications

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

Health Implications

50. 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

51. 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

52. 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

9 September 2014



Title: Equality and Diversity - Update

Report of: Involvement and Diversity Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide a summary of Equality and Diversity work within the organisation for the period April to June 2014.

Background

2. The Company continues to place equality and diversity at the heart of everything it does with one of the values being 'embracing equality'.
3. Our Single Equality Scheme provides the overall approach to the Company's work on equality covering both the organisation as an employer and service provider.
4. The scheme and associated actions help to ensure that we are meeting our requirements under the Equality Act 2010.
5. The Company contributes to the wider equality agenda in Gateshead as a member of Gateshead Council's Corporate Equality Working Group, ensuring that the Company is contributing to the equality objectives set by the council.
6. An Equality and Diversity Report is produced annually setting out our key achievements and demonstrating how we are working in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Knowing our Customers

7. We continue to collect a range of information about our customers to ensure that we understand the makeup and needs of the communities we are working in. This information is used in a range of ways including: -
 - Tailoring service delivery or helping to forecast need for services in the future
 - Targeting customer groups to promote specific services
 - Measuring and comparing satisfaction with services across different groups
 - Communicating with individual customers in the most appropriate method.

8. Information is collected from the outset of someone applying to be a tenant and is followed up at sign up and periodically during their tenancy. This ensures that the information we hold is accurate.
9. The information collected includes the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act as well as information on communication and contact preferences. In order to help us prepare for impending issues such as digital inclusion and Universal Credit we have also started to collect information on access to the internet and use of bank accounts. This information will be reported to a future committee as the level of data held increases.
10. As at 30 June 2014, the profile of our main tenants (19190 tenancies) was as follows: -
 - 58.7% female
 - 3.2% under 25, 41.3% are over 60
 - 2.8% Black Minority Ethnic (BME) with highest proportion consistently Black African
 - 29.4% of households have at least one person indicating they have a disability with the highest reported of mobility issues and mental health.
11. We have now collected information from over 40% of customers on sexuality and religion which will allow us to start using this information to monitor and compare services. We will continue to collect this information through the methods outlined previously to increase the data held. From the data provided we know that: -
 - 1.8% of tenants have indicated that they are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual
 - The highest proportion of our tenants have indicated that they are Christian (62.8%), followed by 1.6% stating they are Muslim. 5.7% of tenants have stated they have no religion.
12. At the start of this financial year, we contracted an external organisation, Synergy to carry out a telephone exercise to collect 1000 records, verifying information currently held and collecting additional information as detailed previously in this report. As a result of this contact with tenants there were a number of additional outcomes from this exercise including: -
 - One potential safeguarding issue identified and reported.
 - Tenants referred to social services for assessments for potential adaptations.
 - Advice and signposting to other services to deal with a range of tenancy issues such as anti-social behaviour, outstanding repairs and estate management issues.

Training and Guidance

13. In the last period we have reviewed and updated our Employee Diversity Resource. This is an online tool for employees which provides information and guidance on the different protected characteristics, details of some of the potential barriers to people accessing our services and the support services employees can use to communicate more effectively.

14. The guidance was reviewed with customers, in particular with the Disabled Persons Housing Forum and BME Housing Forum.
15. In May, members of the Involvement Team attended a Disability and Employment event held by the Percy Hedley Foundation. The aim of this event was to give information and guidance about the issues facing disabled people accessing employment and how organisations can play a role in this.
16. As a result, a follow up meeting was held with the Percy Hedley Foundation to discuss taking a disabled student on a work placement basis. This will be progressed in the next period and reported to a future committee.

Hate Crime

17. In the last period revised guidance has been produced to support our overall approach to hate crime. Customers were involved in the development of this guidance through the Anti-social Behaviour Service Improvement Group and further focus groups of involved residents.
18. Hate crime awareness training has since been delivered to all front line officers within the company to ensure that all employees are equipped to deal effectively with any tenant or leaseholder who wishes to report a hate crime incident.

External recognition

19. In April this year, the organisation was shortlisted for a TPAS Award for Equality and Diversity for the Hoops for Health project delivered in partnership with Newcastle Eagles. This recognised the theme in the 2013/14 programme around stereotyping and hate crime.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Equality

20. We have continued to undertake a range of activities to make the organisation more LGBT inclusive, both as an employer and a service provider.
21. We will be submitting our entry into the 2014/15 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in September and have been implementing actions raised as part of the benchmarking process from last year's submission. The Index was revised by Stonewall for 2014/15 so this will be the first entry we submit in the new framework. Results will be announced in early 2015.
22. In the last period we held the first meeting of our LGBT Employee and Customer Network. The aim of this network is identify the key issues and barriers facing both LGBT customers and employers and work with the group to overcome these. Prior to establishing the group, visits were made to both South Tyneside Homes and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue to learn from their experiences of setting up and sustaining a network group.
23. The group are currently developing a name and branding for the network to publicise and attract wider membership. The next meeting will focus on experiences of reporting Hate Crime and Anti-social behavior.

Link to values

24. 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

25. Through ensuring that equality and diversity is at the heart of how we deliver services, it ensures that we provide services based on a sound understanding of the needs and priorities of our customers.

Risk Management Implications

26. 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. Regular monitoring and reporting on our progress helps to ensure that we continue to meet our requirements.

Financial Implications

27. There are no financial implications directly relating to this report. There is an allocated budget to progress equality and diversity work within the Company. Any future financial implications would be reported to this committee.

Equality and Diversity Implications

28. This report relates to our approach to equality as a whole, ensuring that we are considering the impact on our employees and customers of the decisions we take.

Value for Money Implications

29. 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.

30. Carrying out equality analysis when planning a project or service delivery allows us to identify any issues at the outset and find solutions where possible, rather than having to make potentially costly changes retrospectively.

Health Implications

31. The Company's approach to equality and diversity, embedded within everything that we do will ultimately have a positive impact on people's health and overall wellbeing.

32. A number of the initiatives included within our overall approach to equality has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of either employees or customers.

Environmental Implications

33. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

34. Progress on equality issues are provided to the Involvement Service Improvement Group and the Disabled Persons and BME Housing Forums.

Recommendation

35. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the progress activity relating to Equality and Diversity carried out in the first quarter of 2014/15.

Report to Resources Committee

9 September 2014



Title: Review of ISO 14001

Report of: Support Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide additional information about the review of ISO 14001 following the co-location of the company headquarters to the Civic Centre in February 2014.

Background

2. In 2010 the company introduced the first environmental policy statement and, following a two stage inspection by British Standards Institution (BSI) achieved ISO 14001 certification.
3. The ISO14001 accreditation was based on the minimum level of the Environmental Management System (EMS) criteria that assessed office based activity which included utilities, waste disposal and stationery. Other activities that involved Repairs and Maintenance were assessed by our partners who also have ISO14001 accreditation.
4. The accreditation applied to Keelman House only as our out based housing offices are shared premises with utilities and waste disposal directly controlled by Gateshead Council.

Co-location of Company Headquarters

5. Following the Company's move to the Civic Centre the majority of the Company's EMS elements were no-longer under the control of Gateshead Housing Company with utilities and waste disposal controlled by Gateshead Council. We have maintained our control of stationary ordering and we continue to follow EMS principles and values with this activity.
6. The cost to the Company for BSI external audits and re-accreditation is £3,000 with further mandatory six monthly audits at a cost of £1,800 per annum. Following value for money principles suggests that the cost is excessive when we are only able to maintain control of stationary.

The Future

7. We are keen to continue to maintain the Environmental Policy principles through the work of the Environmental Management Group. We will update our customers via the Service Improvement Group (SIG) and our employees through internal communication methods.
8. We are serious about our social responsibility and will maintain and develop environmental sustainability in work and home life through changes in behaviour and attitudes.
9. We are confident that our employees apply EMS values and principles and this was endorsed in our recent Investors in People (IiP) accreditation and social responsibility assessment.

Link to values

10. The report links to the following company values:-
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being positive and responsive
 - Being caring and respecting

Impact on Customers

11. Whilst there are no direct implications for customers arising directly from this report we are hopeful that our commitment to EMS will improve the environment in which we work and live.
- 12.

Risk Management Implications

13. There are no risk associated to this report

Financial Implications

14. There is a saving to be made by ceasing to continue with the accreditation.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The company's commitment to environmental protection will be of equal benefit to all of our customers.

Value for Money implications

16. Value for money principles have been followed in this report.

Health Implications

17. The health of our customers will be improved by our approach to EMS principles and values and continuation of green policies to reduce emissions.

Environmental Implications

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

Consultation carried out

19. No consultation was necessary when compiling this report.

Recommendation

20. The committee is recommended to note the review of ISO 14001 following the co-location of the company headquarters to the Civic Centre in February 2014.