

COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS



ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

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Luton



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WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT FOR COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS FOR 2020/21

The end of the year coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when our council services adapted quickly to support Luton residents in a time of unprecedented disruption and need. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this time of change.

Housing played a vital role in the council's response, making contact with thousands of vulnerable households to ensure they could access essential items and were safe.

It was heartening to see so many residents help neighbours and forge new community links. We would now like to build on this, and work together to develop successful communities where neighbours support each other and take pride in their living environment. I will be encouraging much closer links with partners, such as the Police and Neighbourhood Watch; as

this will help to combat any anti-social behaviour issues in your area and help us to create strong, diverse communities that we are all proud to be a part of.

Alongside this, we will continue to support residents while the impact of COVID-19 unfolds beyond the immediate crisis.



COUNCILLOR TOM SHAW
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR HOUSING



I'M DELIGHTED TO JOIN LUTON COUNCIL AS YOUR NEW DIRECTOR

It seems like the pandemic is never ending and I am going to get through this piece without mentioning it again, although I will take off my hat to all of you who made things as business-as-usual as possible by your fantastic work and support for all sections of the community.

But let's step forward as I am relatively new here and I want to kick off some key steps to ensuring we can be even more successful in our engagement going forward.

Resident participation is a key housing policy area for me to get my teeth into, so I am looking forward to reviewing how officers are supporting our residents to reach their full potential and to ensure that services are delivering what we say they should. It is important to me for all those who wanted to be included are and for those who don't want to be, that we find an unobtrusive way

to share information so that people are kept informed. That is a big ask because we all know how difficult it is to get communications right sometimes but we have to get this right. So this will be one of my main focuses but rest assured there is a lot more on my radar.

Looking forward to our continued working together.



COLIN MOONE
SERVICE DIRECTOR, HOUSING



HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT

APRIL 2020 TO MARCH 2021

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

RENT COLLECTION - CURRENT ARREARS

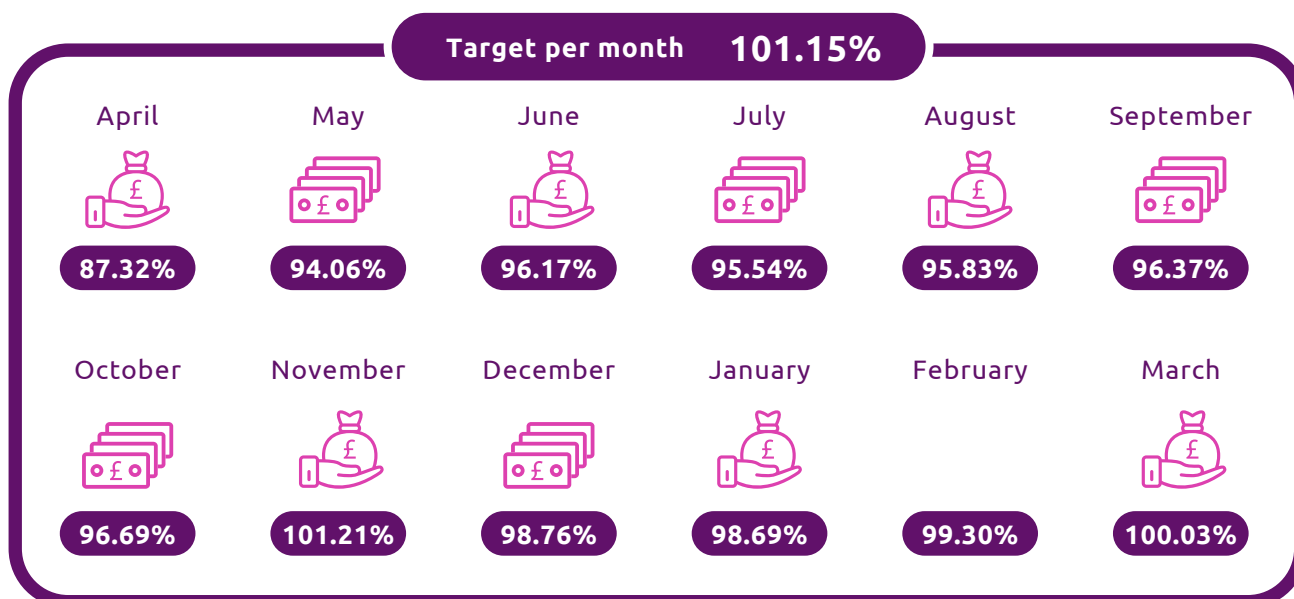
Rent collected as a percentage of rent owned **including** historic rent arrears

Target per month					
97.90%					
April	May	June	July	August	September
84.90%	91.50%	93.55%	92.93%	93.22%	93.74%
October	November	December	January	February	March
93.98%	104.00%	96.00%	95.94%	96.53%	97.20%

The year-end collection rate for arrears including historic arrears is 97.2%, which is just short of the target of 97.9%. Bearing in mind the fact that this target was set pre-COVID, we feel this is good performance. As a reminder COVID resulted in the county courts being closed for several months; a ban on evictions or severe restrictions for all of the year and one of the highest levels of migration in the country from HB to UC due to the number of changes of circumstances and job losses. To put this into context, at the end of April 2020 this was 84.95%.

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Rent collected as a percentage of rent owned **excluding** historic rent arrears.



The year-end collection rate for arrears without historic arrears is 100.03%, which is just short of the target of 101.15%. At the end of April 2020, our collection rate was 87.32%.

RENT ARREARS AS TOTAL AMOUNT OWED

Target per month					
Current tenants rent arrears					
April	May	June	July	August	September
£1,251,648	£1,249,757	£1,314,604	£1,368,344	£1,388,677	£1,448,908
October	November	December	January	February	March
£1,528,492	£1,477,973	£1,311,957	£1,323,721	£1,244,467	£1,098,187

This figure represents the actual sum outstanding in current arrears above. This is a reduction of £19,112 on the year end figure for 2019/20.



RENT COLLECTION – FORMER TENANT ARREARS

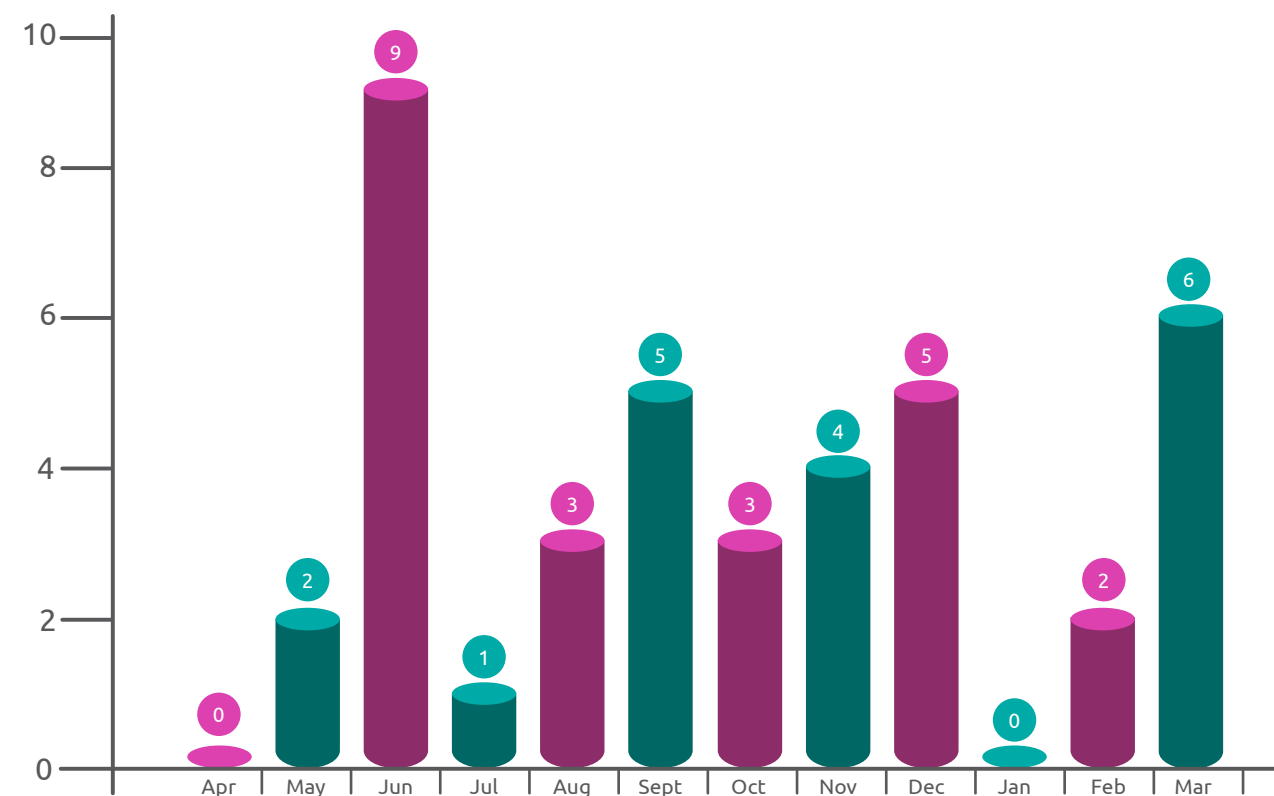
Former tenant rent arrears amount collected.

Target (monthly)					
£25,000					
April	May	June	July	August	September
£4,141	£10,960	£34,305	£60,809	£88,841	£123,739
October	November	December	January	February	March
£163,166	£205,957	£240,897	£292,887	£331,417	£384,633

Collection of FTAs was initially badly affected by COVID-19 but performance improved dramatically by the end of the financial year. By the end of March the amount collected was £384,633 against a rolling target of £300,000. At the end of the financial year we were therefore £84,633 ahead of target.

To date we have lost £3,686,234 due to the move from Housing Benefit (HB) to Universal Credit (UC). That is an increase of £1,544,440 in the financial year. Each £1 lost in HB is a £1 that has to be actively chased. This has speeded up since the start of COVID-19. Once a case moves from HB to UC it will never move back to HB.

RIGHT TO BUY



The total number of properties sold in 2020/21 is 40.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) TOTAL NUMBERS OF LIVE CASES



Month

Number of
Cases Managed
by the Housing
OfficersHigh Level
Cases with ASB
OfficerTotal of Live
Cases Within
the MonthNumber
of Surveys
Completed

Apr 2020

111

97

208

11

May 2020

108

87

195

18

Jun 2020

125

86

211

1

July 2020

155

100

255

10

Aug 2020

103

128

231

9

Sept 2020

136

93

229

4

Oct 2020

160

85

245

8

Nov 2020

132

90

222

2

Dec 2020

127

95

222

7

Jan 2021

125

87

212

3

Feb 2021

125

115

240

5

Mar 2021

130

78

208

6

Housing officers manage the lower level or less serious ASB cases on their patches. Specialist housing ASB officers manage the more serious ASB cases.

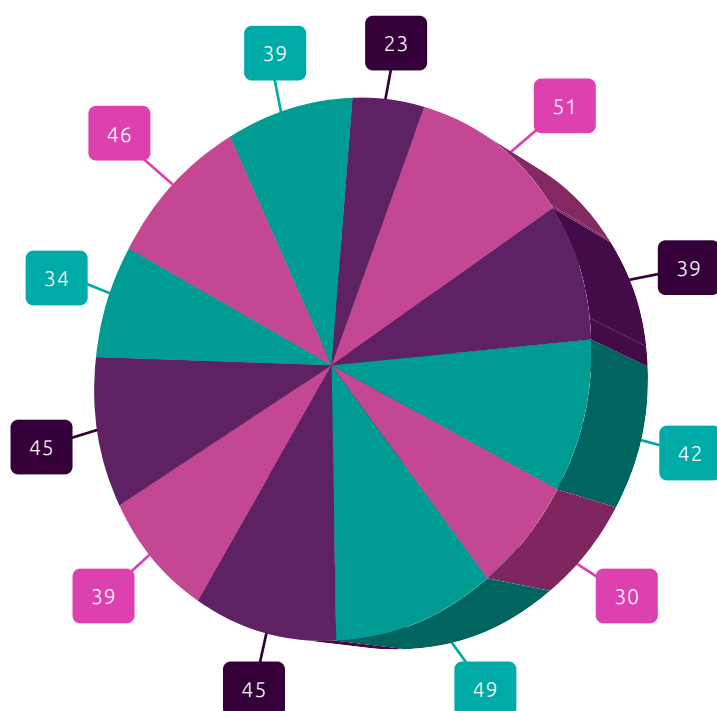
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) SATISFACTION

Target per month					
Satisfaction % achieved in month – target 66%					
April 2020	May	June	July	August	September
80%	82%	80%	80%	71%	50%
October	November	December	January	February	March 2021
77%	70%	70%	73%	84%	90%

Performance has improved to 90% in March which is ahead of target. Performance has been ahead of target for all but one month this financial year.

NUMBER OF TENANCY AUDITS – VISITS TO TENANTS

Number of audits



Target per month			
150			
Apr	May	Jun	Jul
23	51	39	42
Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
30	49	45	39
Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
45	34	46	39

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Due to the Covid pandemic, home visits to secure rented stock have been reduced and risk assessed, however audits have been done by other means, where possible. Tenancy audits in sheltered housing have been suspended due to the increased risk to vulnerable tenants but this has been balanced by an increase in proactive phone welfare checks to tenants. To date against a year to date target of 1500 tenancy audits only 482 have been completed which is only 32% of the target. Audits have increased now COVID restrictions have been lifted.

HOUSING FRAUD RECOVERIES

Target per year					
20					
April	May	June	July	August	September
1	0	0	0	0	0
October	November	December	January	February	March
0	0	0	0	2	0

Because of COVID restrictions and the fact that the courts were either closed or only dealing with high priority cases we only recovered 3 properties due to fraud.

SHELTERED HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS (INCLUDING COMMUNAL PULL CORD TESTING)

Target per month 100% (22)

April



100%

May



100%

June



100%

July



100%

August



100%

September



100%

October



100%

November



100%

December



100%

January



100%

February



100%

March



100%

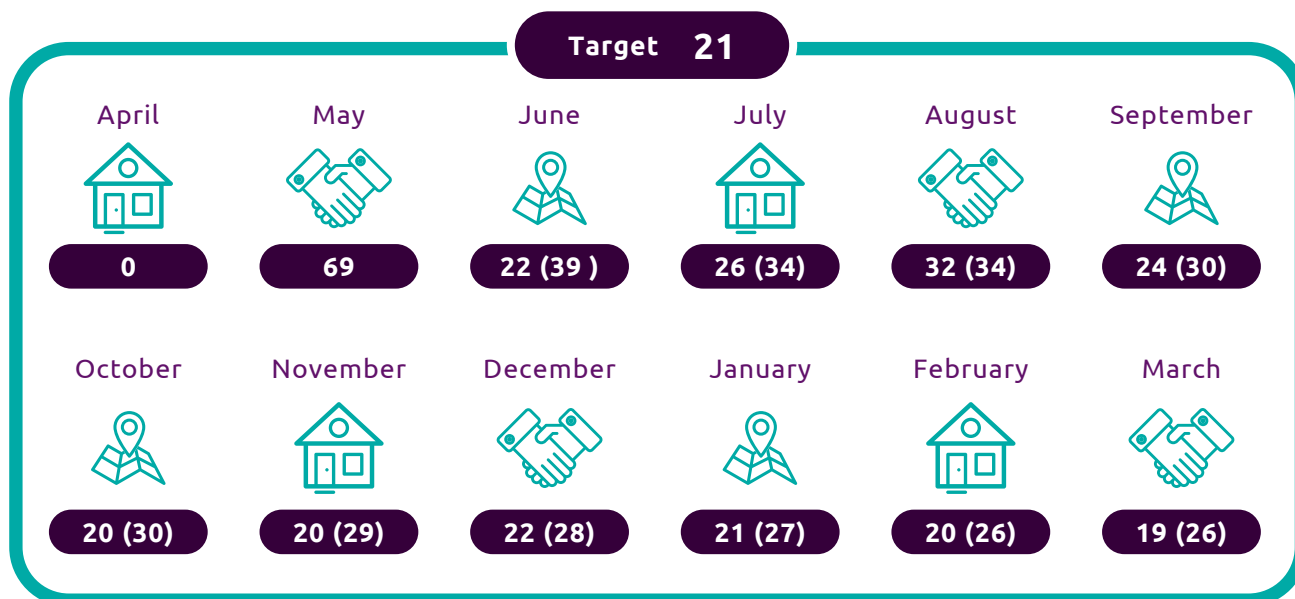
Inspections currently carried out on our behalf by BTS due to COVID-19, communal pull cords continue to be tested by Sheltered Housing. Performance was not affected by COVID-19 – this is a key health and safety function of the service.

The aim is to increase the number of properties using key-safes to help tenants and their family access flats in an emergency or when a key is mislaid. The number is gradually increasing due to work by the team.

HOUSING NEEDS

LETTING/VOIDS/STOCK TURNOVER PERFORMANCE

Average relet times – general needs in days (year to date cumulative performance in brackets)



Both in-month and cumulative figures are reported. No lets were made from 1 April to 22 May due to Covid-19 restrictions. Performance is impacted by Covid related factors: August performance was high due to two voids where tenancies were terminated but keys could not be returned by tenant's relatives due to Covid restrictions - this resulted in void periods of 101 & 161 days. If these returns are removed August performance would have been 22 days in-month, 32 cumulative. In month performance from October has been close to or exceeded target performance.

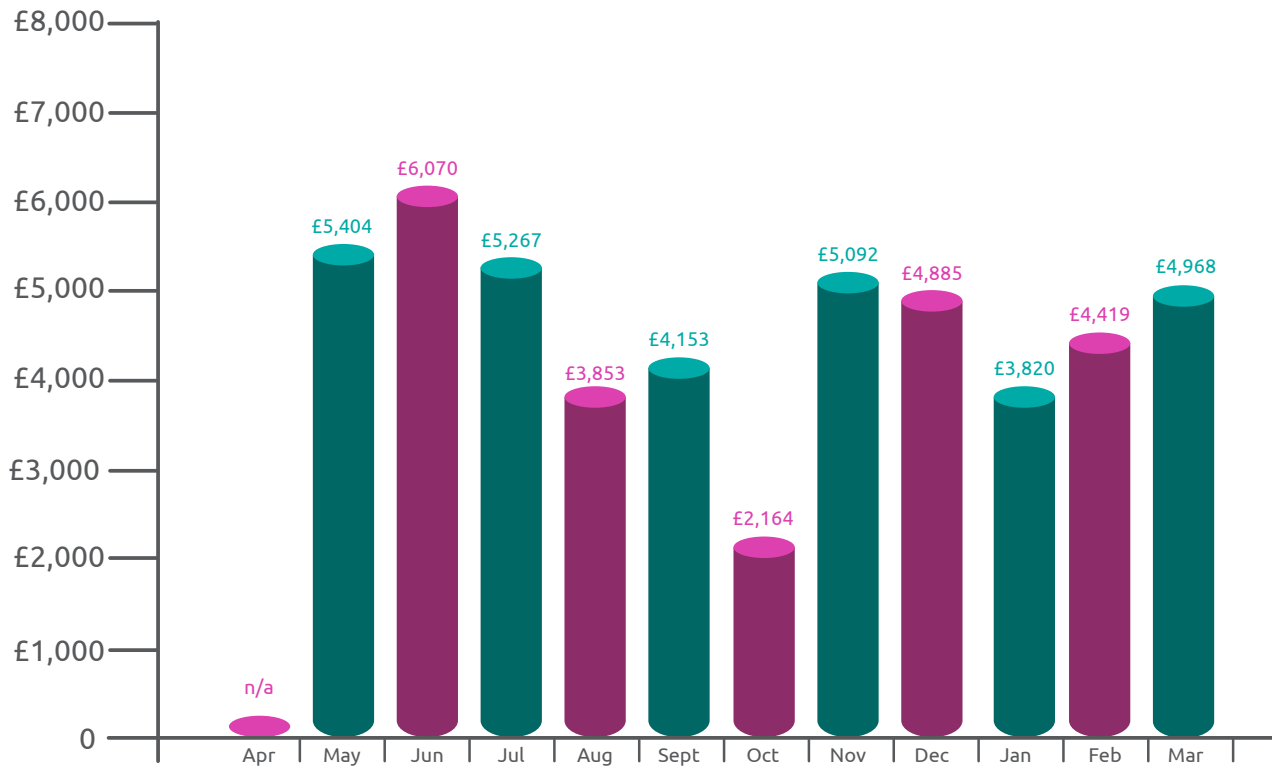
11

AVERAGE RELET TIMES – SHELTERED IN HOUSING DAYS (YEAR TO DATE CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE IN BRACKETS)

Target					
23					
April	May	June	July	August	September
0	17	0 (17)	91 (84)	68 (75)	66 (72)
October	November	December	January	February	March
41 (67)	23 (62)	30 (59)	49 (58)	40 (55)	37 (54)

Both in-month and cumulative figures are reported. Sheltered re-lets started again on 20/07/2020 following a suspension during the 1st Covid lockdown which led to extended void periods for properties which remained vacant and ready to let during this period. New Covid letting arrangements applied to sheltered schemes are resulting in extended void periods. Demand for sheltered accommodation has also been below expected levels since the first Covid lockdown in March '20 which, combined with a surplus of vacant properties, is negatively impacting on void turnaround performance.

AVERAGE VOID COSTS



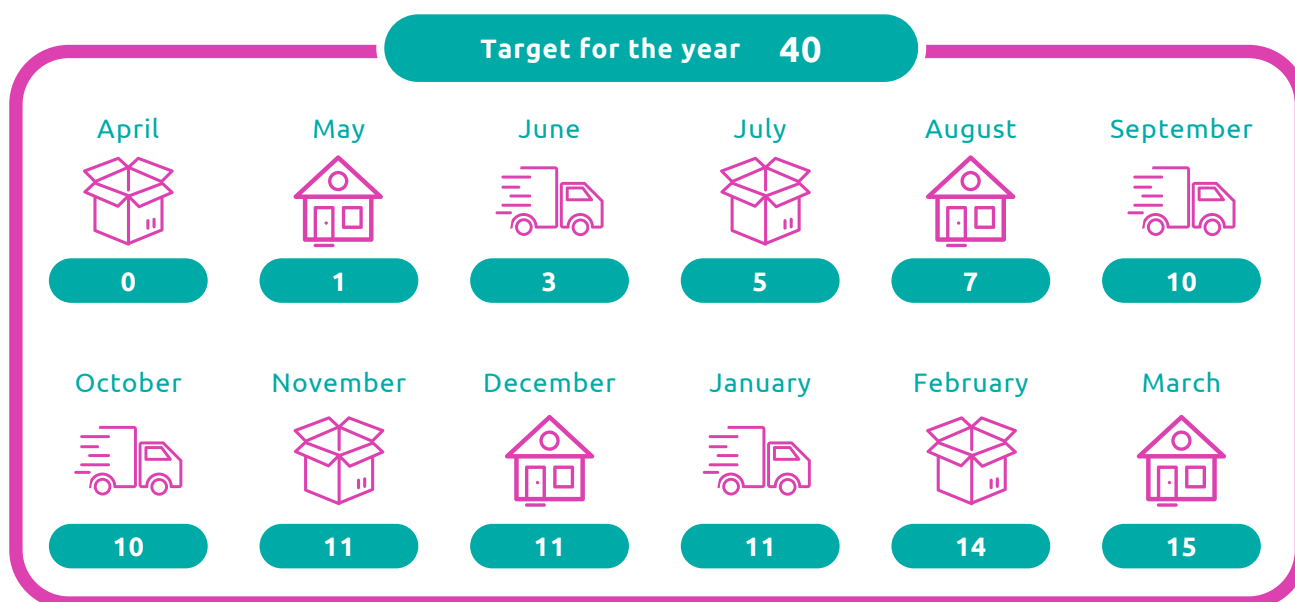
12 **Commentary:** * Average Void cost is reported one month retrospectively.

MAJOR WORKS VOIDS

Target					
20					
April	May	June	July	August	September
0	0	1	1	1	3
October	November	December	January	February	March
3	6	6	6	6	6

Major works voids are properties requiring significant works to meet the lettable standard. Figures are cumulative.

NUMBER OF UNDER OCCUPIER TRANSFERS IN THE STOCK



The target has not been met due to COVID restrictions. Figures are cumulative. A new "Incentive to Move" scheme offering cash payments to under-occupying tenants moving to smaller homes is to be presented to Executive.

DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLETED ADAPTATIONS (COUNCIL AND PRIVATE STOCK - CUMULATIVE)

13

Target for the year					
190					
April	May	June	July	August	September
4	11	16	23	31	38
October	November	December	January	February	March
49	57	64	77	101	132

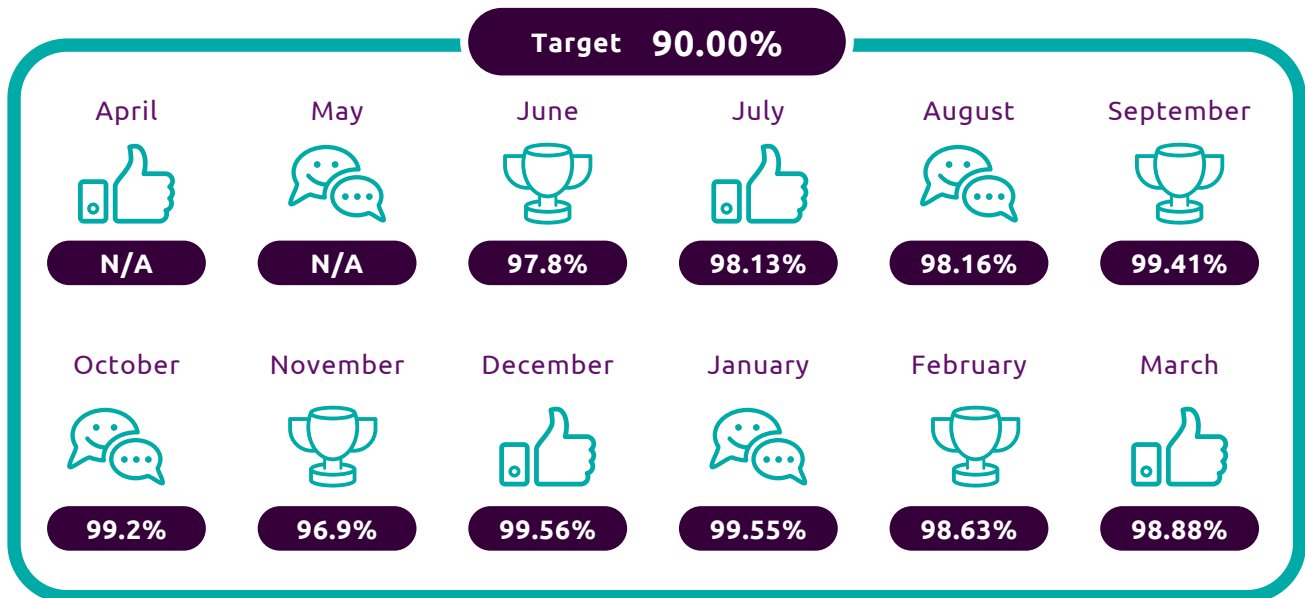
OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH ADAPTATION (COUNCIL AND PRIVATE)

Target for the year					
98%					
April	May	June	July	August	September
100%	99%	91%	91%	94%	96%
October	November	December	January	February	March
95%	96%	96%	96%	94%	95%

In total so far this year only 2 returns has answered lower than 4 showing standards are still high 31/33 saying they were very satisfied. The effects of lockdown are still showing in the numbers and will continue to do so for some time to come.

REPAIRS

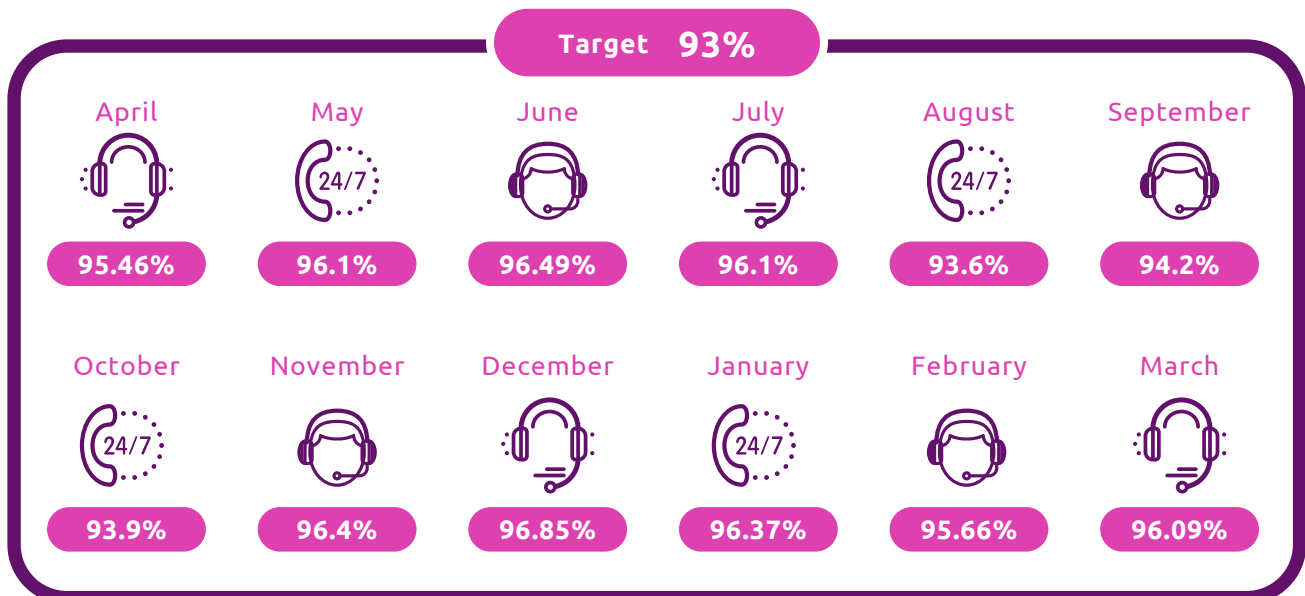
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION & RIGHT FIRST TIME



This KPI is collected by contacting the tenants with recently completed repairs. BTS customer support officers contact tenants and complete a customer satisfaction questionnaire. BTS completed 1166 surveys in last quarter and 99.02% of the customers on average surveyed shown their satisfaction with recently repairs in last quarter.

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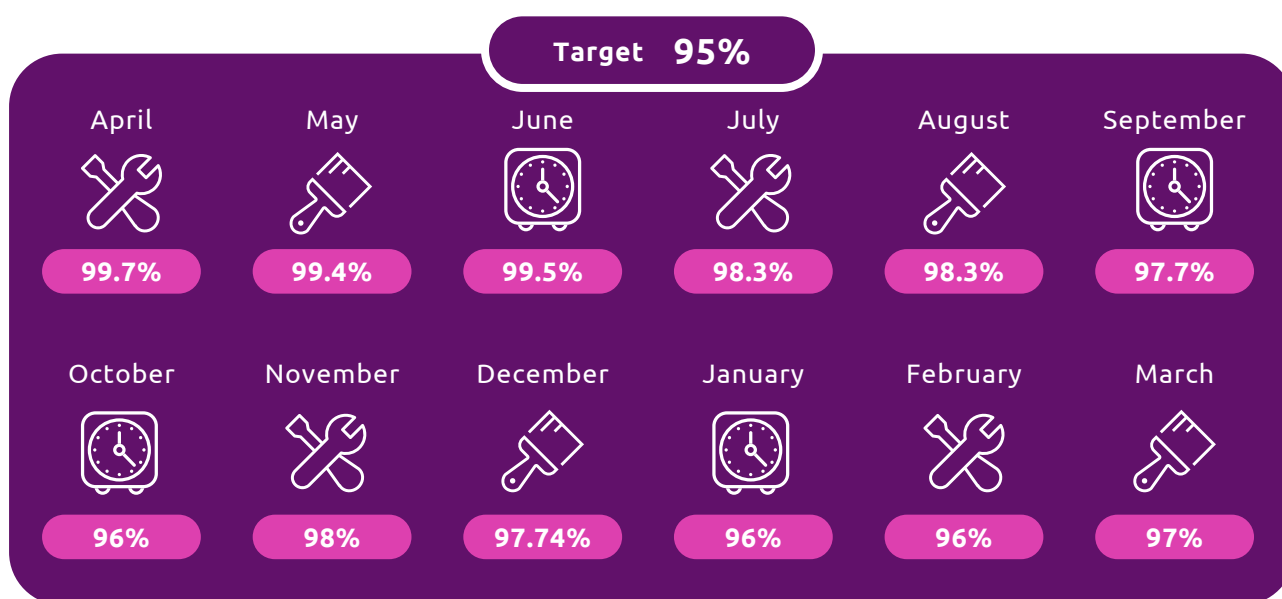
BTS - CALL CENTRE STATISTICS - CALLS ATTENDED



13054 calls were taken in total by the BTS call centre in the last financial quarter and answered 97% on average.

BTS - REPAIR COMPLETION TIMELINESS – EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Target					
100%					
April	May	June	July	August	September
100% (299)	100% (134)	100% (274)	100% (151)	100% (376)	100% (281)
October	November	December	January	February	March
100% (316)	100% (355)	100% (397)	100% (461)	100% (693)	100% (390)

BTS - REPAIR COMPLETION TIMELINESS – ALL REPAIRS

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BTS carried out 6,590 day to day repairs in the last financial quarter out of which 6365 were completed on time. This is about 96.8% average which is well within the target of 95% industry target.

BTS - COMPLAINTS

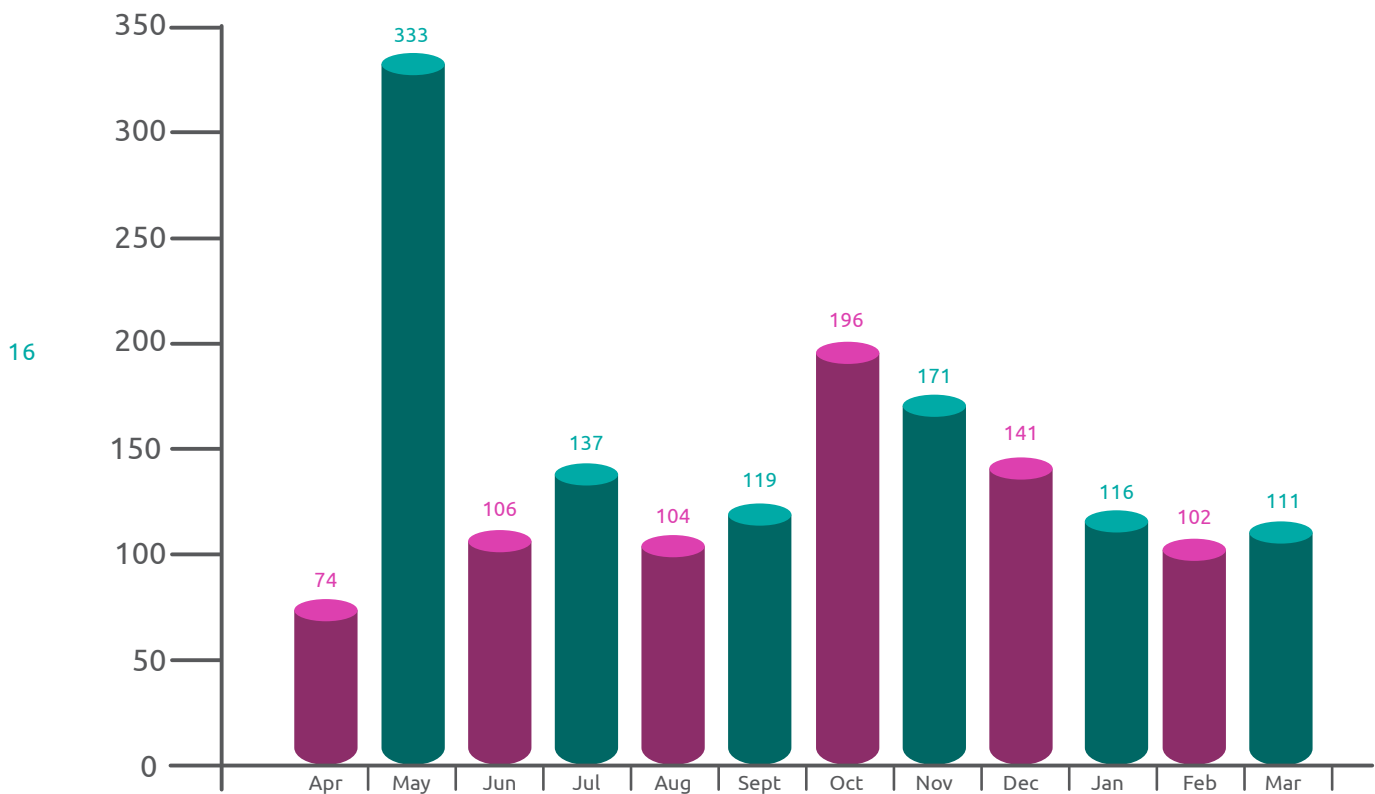
Target					
10					
April	May	June	July	August	September
5	16	9	9	4	8
October	November	December	January	February	March
4	3	7	3	2	2

In addition to above self-explanatory figures, please note that BTS received 27 compliments during the last quarter.

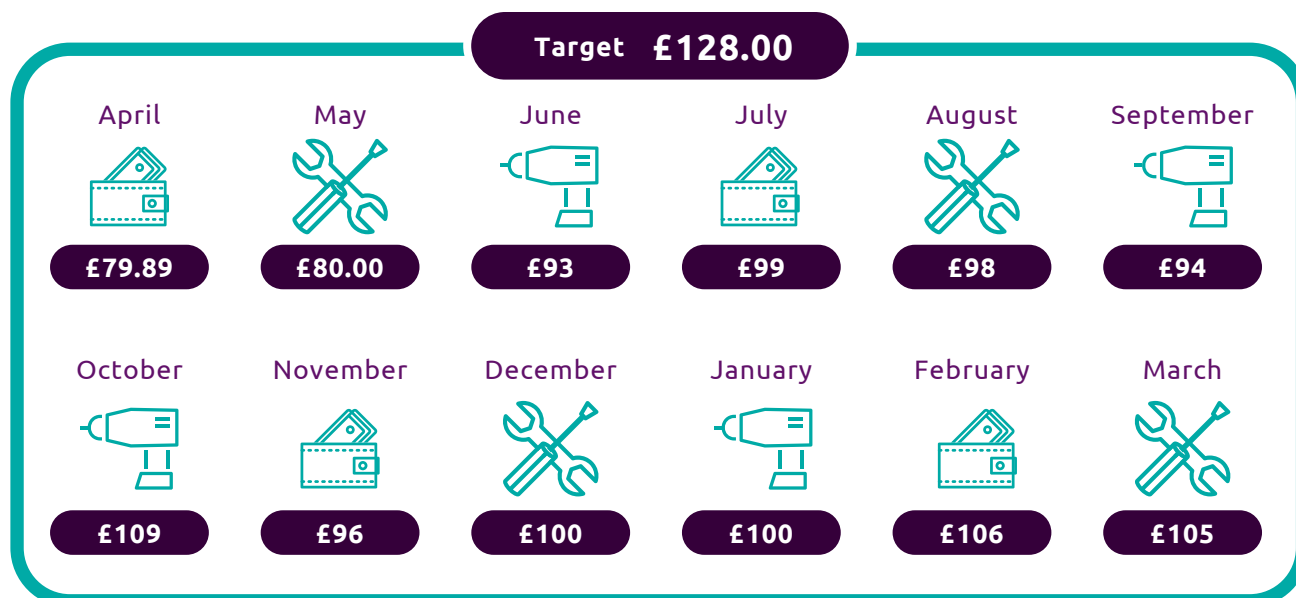
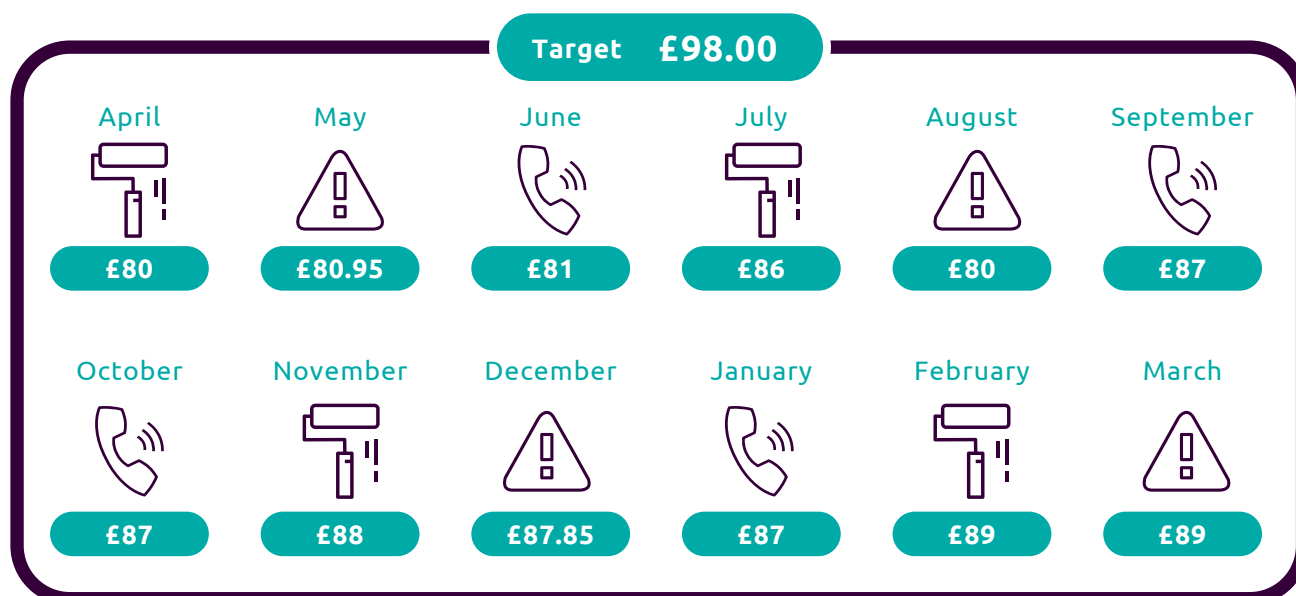
BTS - COMPLIMENTS

April	May	June	July	August	September
4	4	11	9	6	4
October	November	December	January	February	March
1	8	8	9	11	7

BTS received an average of 7 compliments a month.

BTS - NO ACCESS (DAY TO DAY REPAIRS)

Please note that it costs the council about £60 for every 'no access' repairs appointment. No access calls cost the council approx £80,000 for the year. BTS sends a text/letter or calls tenants to agree an appointment prior to attending to carry out the repair.

BTS – AVERAGE REPAIR COST – DAY TO DAY**BTS – AVERAGE REPAIR COST – STANDBY ONLY (OUT OF HOURS)**

17

BTS always strives to utilise its limited resources effectively and efficiently as it's shown in the stats above which show the average costs of day-to-day and standby repairs. Our repairs expense is lower than industry average. This low repairs cost helps in widening our repairs base and carry out the repairs which most of other councils include in tenant's responsibilities.

ACCOUNTS

MAKING SENSE OF THE MONEY

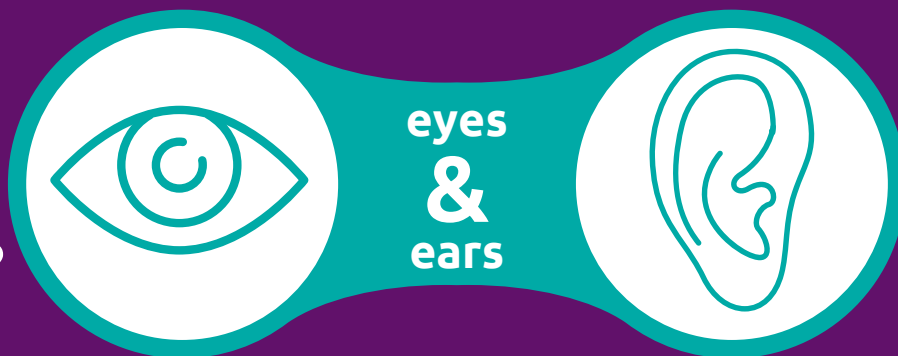
Luton Council manages around 7,400 tenanted homes. In 2019/20 income was about £34 million. Most of the income comes from rent, but tenants and leaseholders are also charged for services and facilities that the council provides. Below is an overview of how rent and other income was spent during the year, including the percentage of money spent in each area.

INCOME	INCOME	%
	£000	%
Contribution towards costs	-279,044.96	0.70
Charges for Services and Facilities	-4,585,649.91	11.43
Garage and Shop Rents	-1,202,818.17	3.00
Property Rent	-1,202,818.17	84.88
	34,050,640.10	100

EXPENDITURE	EXPENDITUE	%
	£000	%
Housing Management	2,706,576.02	7.36
Estate Management	1,006,413.85	2.74
Income Management	351,286.15	0.96
Anti-Social Behaviour	125,135.38	0.34
Tenant Involvement	107,581.63	0.29
Capital Charges	16,948,847.93	46.08
Repairs and Maintenance	13,154,845.82	35.77
Rents and Rates	219,305.61	0.60
Central Charges	2,160,832.09	5.87
	36,780,824.48	100
Transferred to Reserve to fund capital projects	-3,337,328.66	

KEY CUSTOMERS

WHAT IS A KEY CUSTOMER?



It is someone who can be the eyes of the community, they look at what's happening in their neighbourhood and then report it.

The main issues that people complain about is:



Rubbish



Flytipping



Overgrown grass / weeds



Bins not being emptied



Broken doors in communal blocks

19

We want to improve our services by listening to you and for you to be the ears of the community.

WE WELCOME NEW KEY CUSTOMERS FROM ALL AREAS OF THE TOWN

For further information please contact:
Tenant Participation Team



07809 100 433



tenantparticipationteam@luton.gov.uk








**Luton Borough Council
have achieved the Tpas
Landlord Accreditation**

BY MEETING THE TPAS NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT STANDARDS



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