

PERFORMANCE REPORT

This performance report details the position as at the end of Quarter 1, 2009.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to allow the Board to examine the company's performance. It will enable members to develop an understanding of areas of strong performance and where improvements are needed.

In April the Board agreed to a new set of indicators to be reported for the company. As we are a newly merged company it is understandable that parts of the business are starting from different positions. Performance reporting to the Board is long established in Blyth Valley whilst reporting in Alnwick was previously through a different structure. In addition to this we are reporting some new indicators that don't have baseline comparisons from last year. Before the Board consider the report it is important to consider the following points:

- We have used a new report format for this report to incorporate the new indicators and make best use of the information we have available.
- In some service areas in Alnwick reporting systems are in the process of being established and information is not currently available for certain indicators. We have indicated where graphs contain Blyth Valley information only.
- Many of the indicators are new and there is no baseline comparison available for them. This means for some there is limited data which, when in the form of a graph, does not put current performance in context. As these indicators mature and more data is collected, trend analysis will develop.
- Performance reporting is a work in progress with the merging of two organisations. It is unclear how long it will take to get complete information from Alnwick on all the indicators at present. It will be at least six months before the report has information which can be analysed in detail and trends can be identified for the company as whole. We will highlight areas of strength and areas for improvement and this can be supplemented through verbal updates by officers.
- The rent collection service in Alnwick is currently carried out by the Council. This means we have limited ability to influence or control performance of the service. This is something that will be reviewed with other service level agreements through the course of 2009/10.

The Quartile Indicator boxes show how we compare against other organisations from information taken from Housemark. The key for the boxes is below:

Upper Quartile

Middle Quartile

Lower Quartile

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is therefore recommended that the Board:

- **Note the comments regarding performance.**
- **Make any other comments it feels appropriate.**

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Blyth - There has been some reduction in rent arrears. Problems still remain with the backlog at Housing Benefit – although at a recent meeting they agreed to complete the claims of 50 high profile cases identified and passed to them by the Income Team. A backlog of documents at housing benefit, relating to claims, has not been scanned or is only partly scanned. This is contributing to further delays when the information is requested again.

Bar codes for rent payments are still not working and have been sent out again to residents. The issue of the manual inputs has now been resolved. Standing orders are still not hitting accounts and are only put on by NCC when identified and requested by HFN. **Arrears total £451.3k.**

Alnwick – The rent arrears represent a sharp increase in both the total level of arrears and the number of tenants in arrears. Whilst both increases are not wholly unexpected given the current economic climate, the levels indicated have been artificially increased due to various other factors. Reduced resources within the revenues section at Alnwick have resulted in rent duties being somewhat neglected to accommodate the increased workload relating to Council Tax. The result of this being that payment arrangements etc. have not been monitored and requisite action taken as it would have been prior to April this year.

However the fundamental problem since local government review has been the allocation of payments to rent accounts. Presently the allocation of payments being made at Post Offices is taking weeks from the date of payment to the transaction appearing on the tenant's rent account. Provisions are currently being made to hasten this process by way of issuing tenant's with swipe cards that will transfer monies directly from the Post Office to the new Council's bank account.

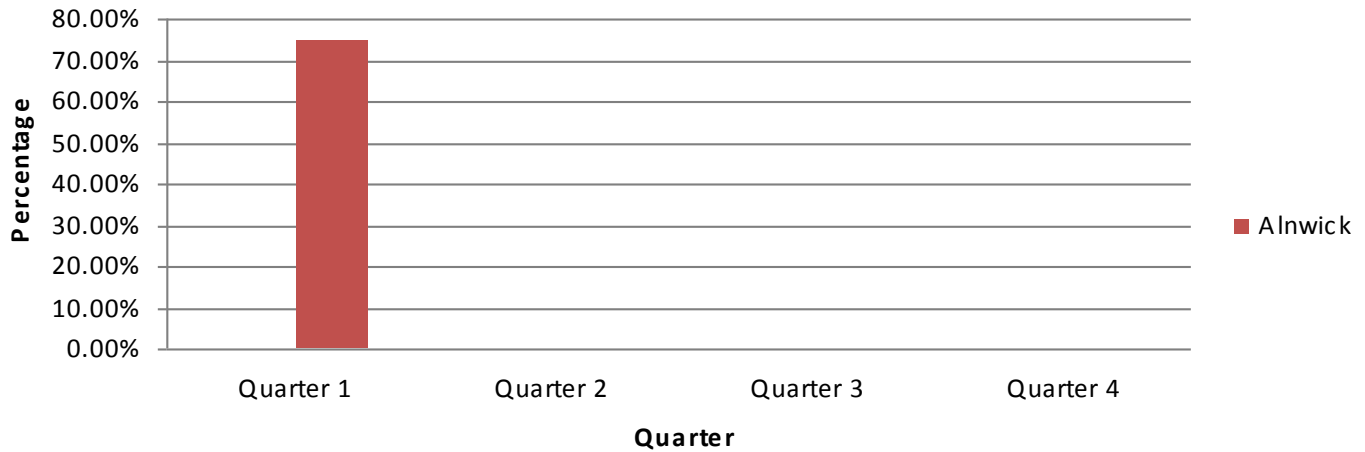
Deductions that are made from staff wages on a monthly basis together with payment of the warden's rent, which is arranged separately, are still awaiting posting to the respective rent accounts. We are also awaiting payments received from third parties (Northumberland Healthcare Trust and Department of Work and Pensions) to be allocated to tenant's rent accounts. Despite extensive efforts to resolve this matter there have been no monies allocated to the respective accounts since March this year. There are also payments awaiting allocation from the Alnwick rent suspense account which require analysis.

The reasons cited above are directly attributable to the first quarterly return for this year. In addition to these we have been unable to set up any new direct debit payers since April due to problems with the configuration of the Northgate Rents software which was a consequence of our conversion to AUDDIS, coupled with the change of the target bank account. A resolution to this problem has almost been reached and we are hopeful of collecting as normal with effect from 15 July 2009.

Amble Cash Office is now closed all day Monday and every afternoon Tuesday to Friday. The reduced opening hours of the cash office will impact upon us but it is too early to predict what this will be. On a positive note it may result in greater direct debit take up, but the likelihood is that most of those customers will resort to making payments at the Post Office. This will result in a negative short term impact due to the delay in payments reaching us compared to cash office transactions which appear on accounts the following day. This problem will be somewhat reduced upon the inception of the new swipe cards. It is particularly disappointing to have no input regarding the restructuring of the opening hours. Monday has always been the busiest day of the week in terms of rent related transactions, and I have already fielded numerous telephone calls from disgruntled customers in respect of this matter.

In summary, it is evident that more than 75% of tenants in arrears have only small balances and many of these will not be in arrears at all if payments were being allocated more readily. Hopefully many, if not all, of the outstanding issues can be resolved in the near future to enable a more accurate account of the position at Alnwick. **Arrears total £197.8k**

Percentage of Sustained Tenancies - Alnwick

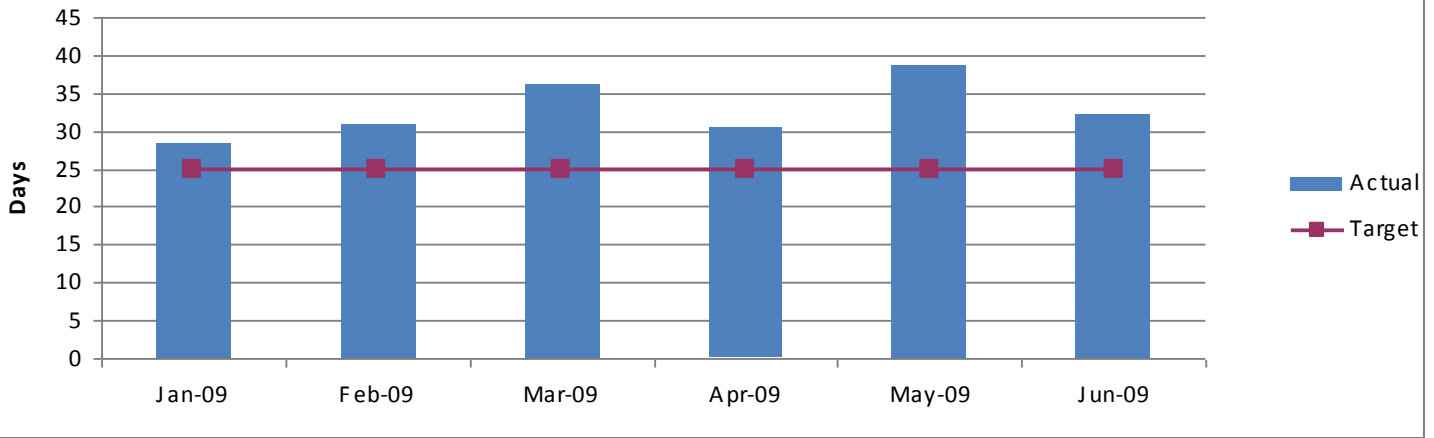


	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Blyth	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Alnwick	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Blyth – We are currently unable to provide this information for Blyth Valley.

Alnwick - New initiatives such as the provision of furnished tenancies will have a positive impact on the ability of tenants to sustain their tenancy.

Average Relet Time - HfN

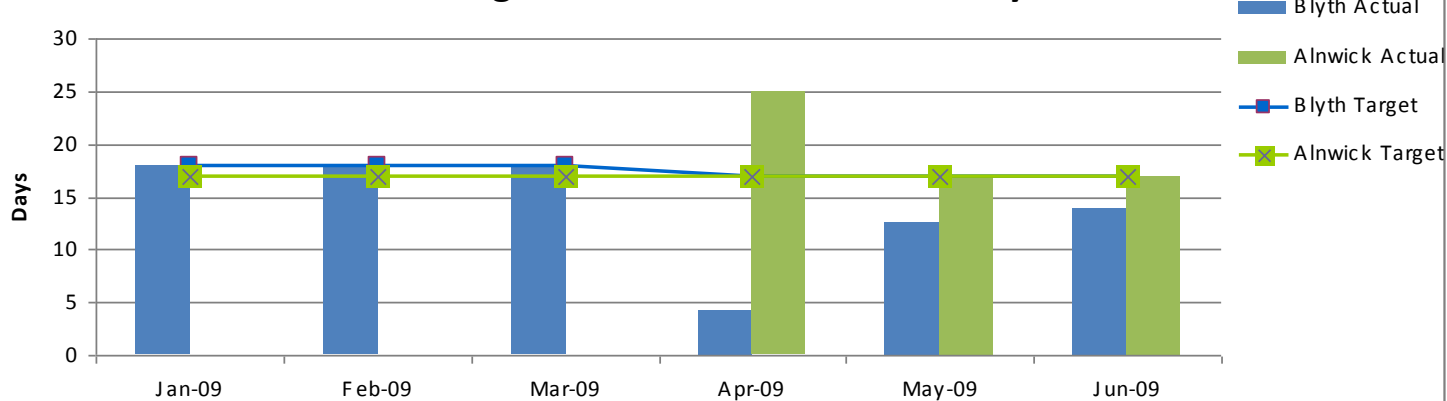


	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Quartile Indicator
Actual	28.5	30.9	36.2	30.5	38.6	32.27	
Target	25	25	25	25	25	25	

Blyth - The first quarter void performance (24.18 days) is within overall target of 25 days. Strategies to continue to meet and improve the target have been put in place. However there maybe a short term impact on the target with the introduction of the new Northumberland Homefinder service, which goes live on the 3rd September 2009.

Alnwick – Although 43 days to relet is a marked improvement from May’s figure of 54 days, this figure was higher due to a property having damp-proofing works carried out and the property not drying out quickly. Two properties also had a large number of refusals.

Average Homeless Decision Days



	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09
Blyth Actual	17.89	17.9	17.8	4.13	12.65	13.94
Blyth Target	18	18	18	17	17	17
Alnwick Actual	0	0	0	25	17	17
Alnwick Target	17	17	17	17	17	17

Blyth - The Homeless & Housing Advice team have had a successful first quarter. There have been 170 preventions this quarter through the early intervention work of the Housing Advice team.

There have been 40 homeless presentations made but only 5 homeless cases accepted. We have taken an average of 13.94 days to make a homeless decision which continues to be below target.

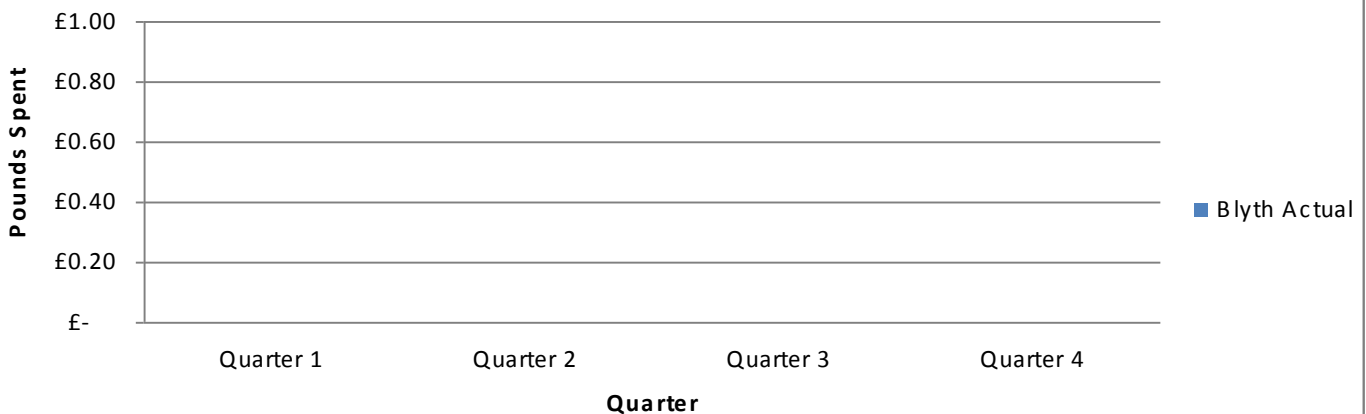
Alnwick - It would appear that greater efficiency was achieved due to one officer being dedicated solely to the function.

RPU Changes to Policy/Strategy - Blyth



	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Blyth Actual	3	0	0	0

RPU Spend Per Property - Blyth



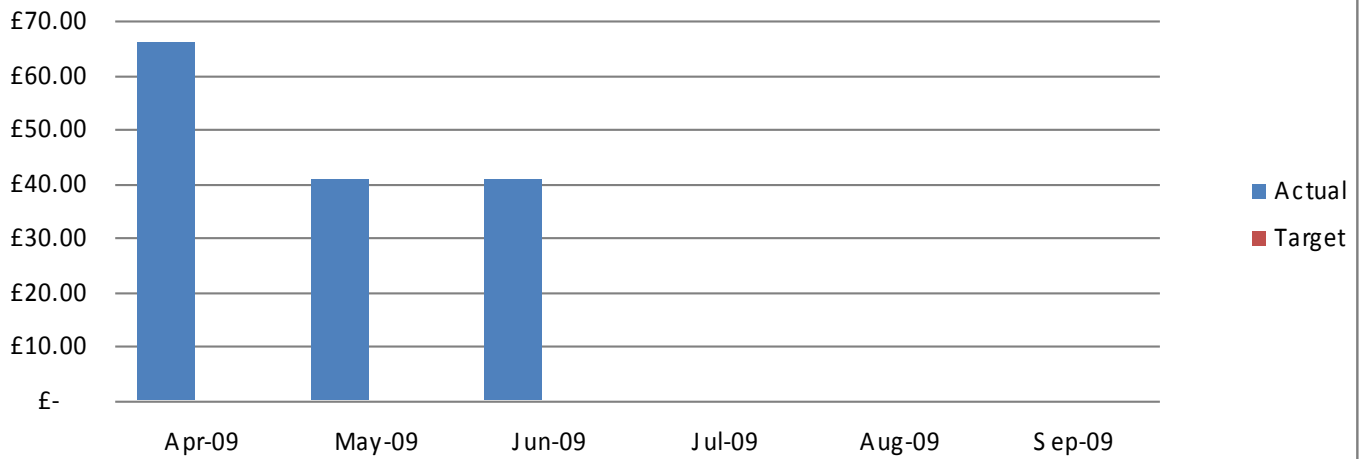
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Blyth Actual	N/A	£ -	£ -	£ -

Blyth – 62 Residents were trained in Financial Inclusion work in the first quarter. Our financial inclusion manager has given talks at 3 external events that have led to changes to other organisations' services.

RPU was understaffed from April until May when staff returned from sick or were new in post. This is reflected in the above figures.

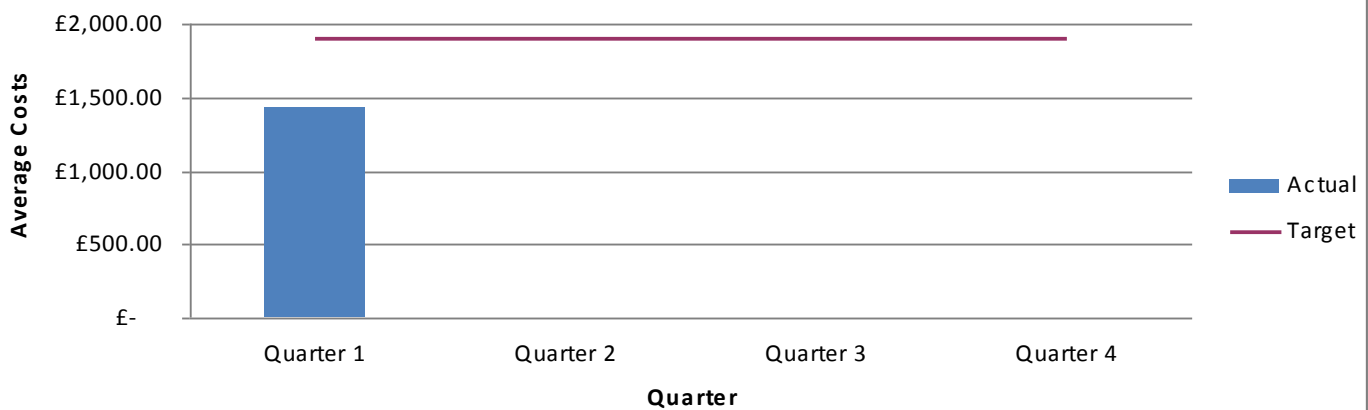
We are unable to calculate the RPU spend per property at the moment due to difficulties with financial systems' accuracy.

Average Responsive Repair Costs - Blyth



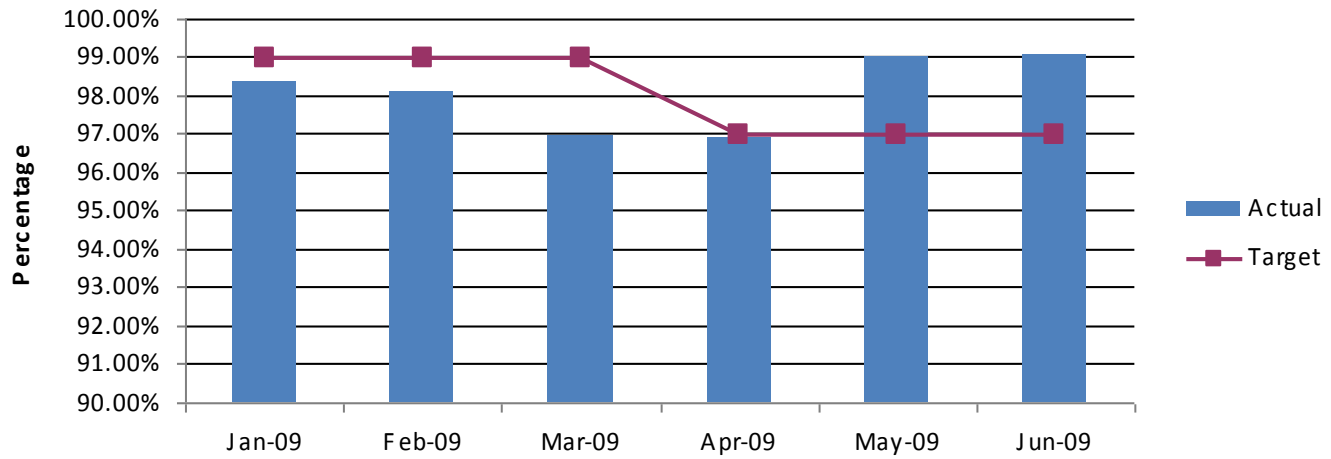
	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Actual	£ 66.00	£ 40.50	£ 40.50	£ -	£ -	£ -
Target	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -

Average Void Costs - Blyth



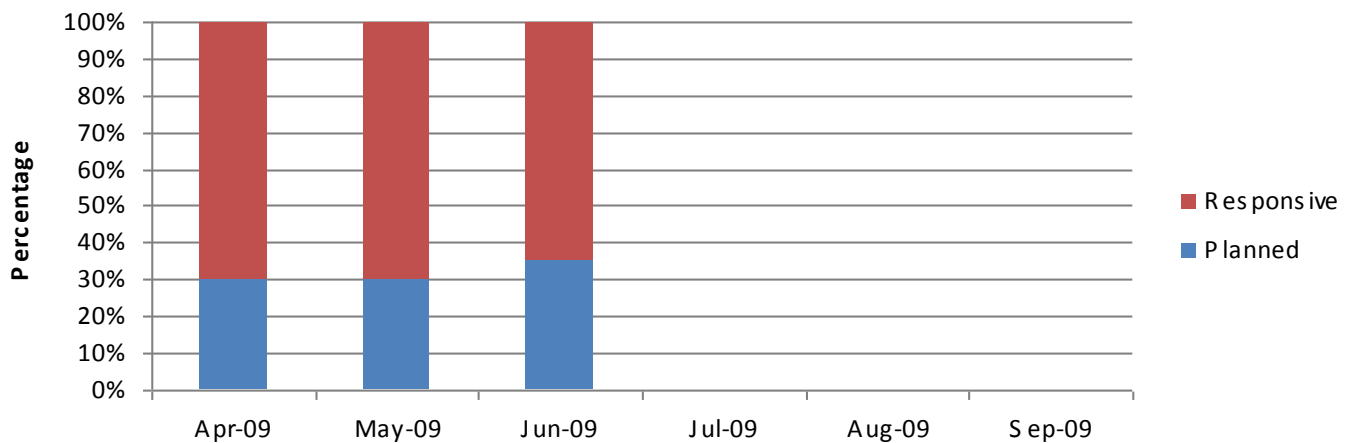
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Actual	£ 1,430.00	£ -	£ -	£ -
Target	£ 1,900.00	£ 1,900.00	£ 1,900.00	£ 1,900.00

Percentage of Jobs in Priority - Blyth



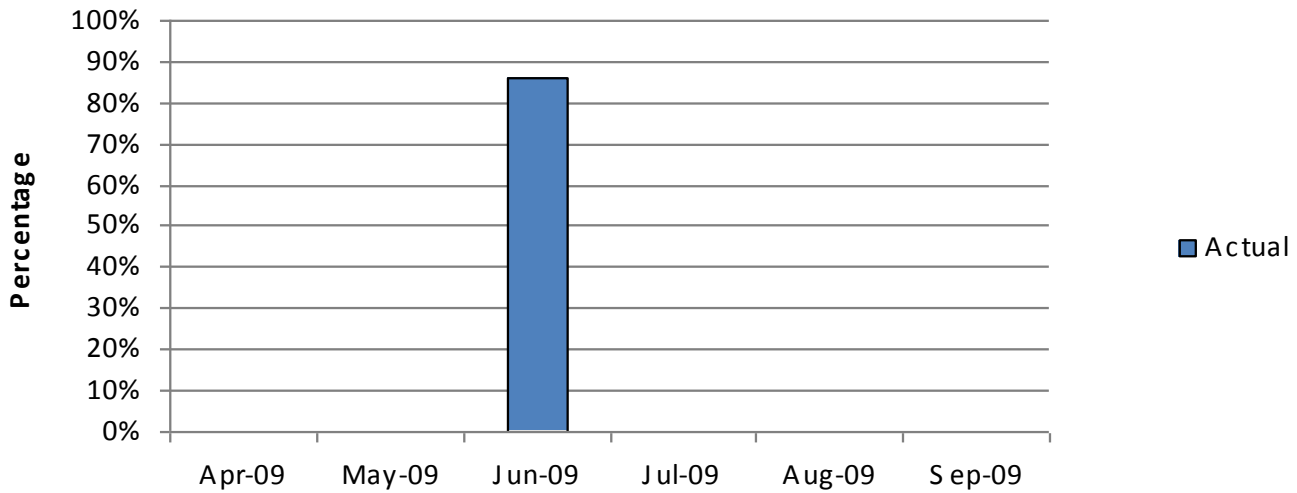
	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09
Actual	98.37%	98.10%	97.00%	96.91%	99.03%	99.10%
Target	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%

Percentage Planned Works - Blyth



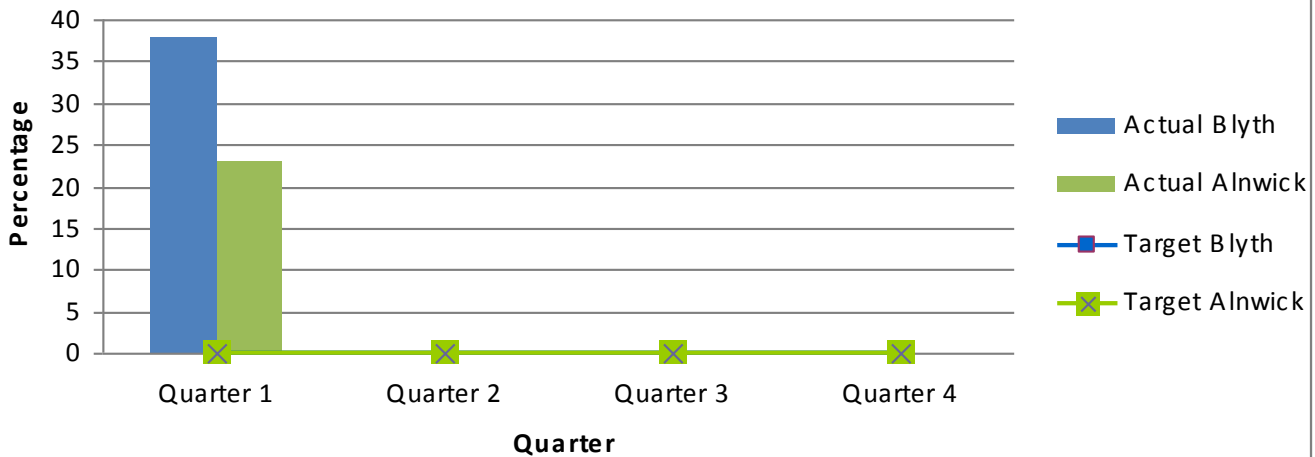
	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Planned	30%	30%	35%	0%	0%	0%
Responsive	70%	70%	65%	0%	0%	0%

Customer Satisfaction - Blyth



	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Actual	0%	0%	86%	0%	0%	0%

Properties without a Gas Service

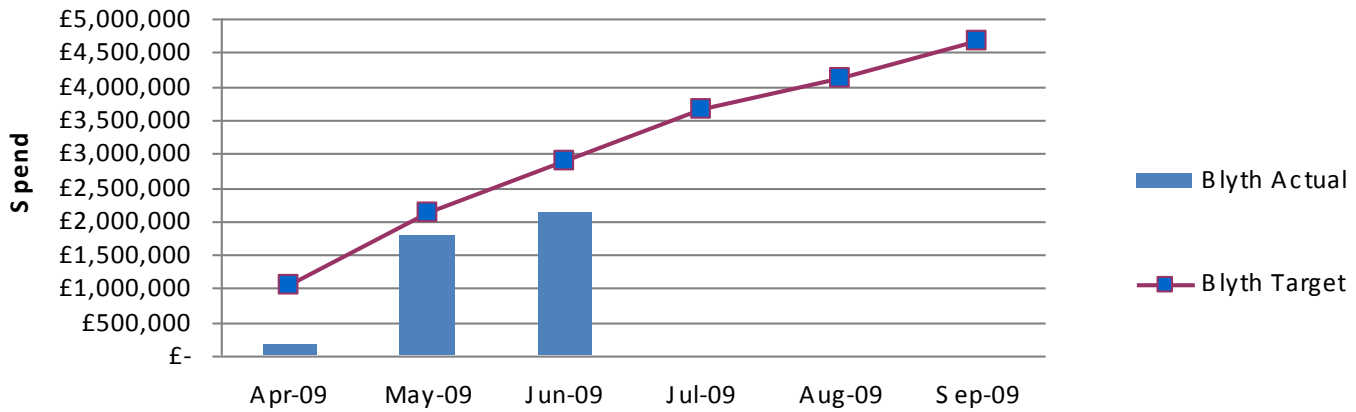


	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Actual Blyth	38	0	0	0
Target Blyth	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Actual Alnwick	23	0	0	0
Target Alnwick	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Blyth - First quarter figures for R&M reflect the ongoing efforts of all the team, performance in all areas is high and the all-round commitment of all staff members is reflected in the results. Voids and day to day repairs are maintaining the high standards set in April, and the policy of providing a quality service with cost effective management is beginning to be reflected in our results and performance figures.

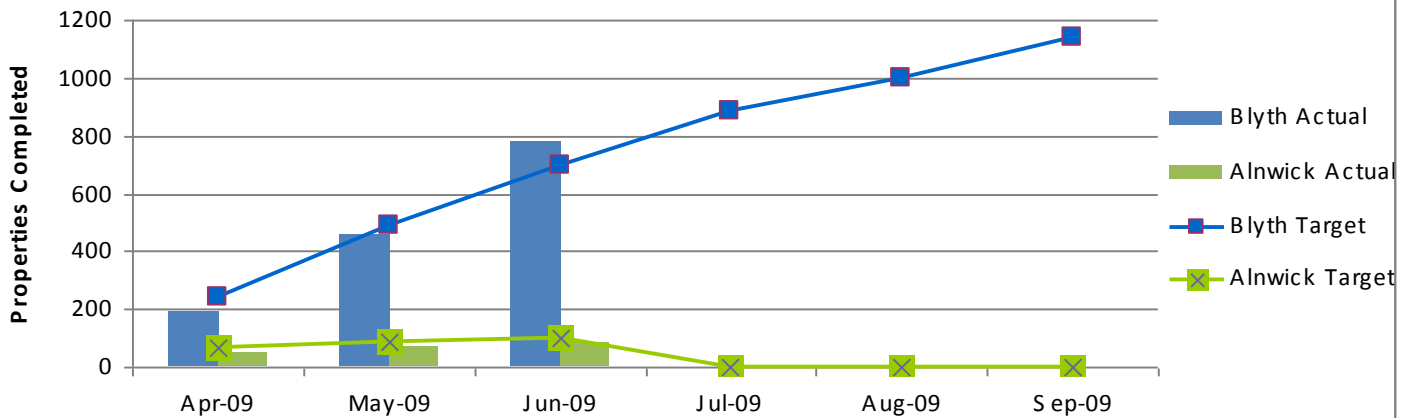
Whilst continuing to raise our level of service delivery for our customers we are also looking at taking our service out to others in the sector and have been looking at the possibility of providing a R&M service to 31 properties owned by Home Group within our area and later this month we will be looking at some more properties owned by Gentoo in the Ashington area.

Capital Spend to Budget - Blyth



	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Blyth Actual	£ 151,297	£ 1,767,962	£ 2,108,580	£ -	£ -	£ -
Blyth Target	£ 1,056,300	£ 2,109,975	£ 2,869,650	£ 3,637,935	£ 4,105,710	£ 4,670,610

Completions Against Target - Blyth

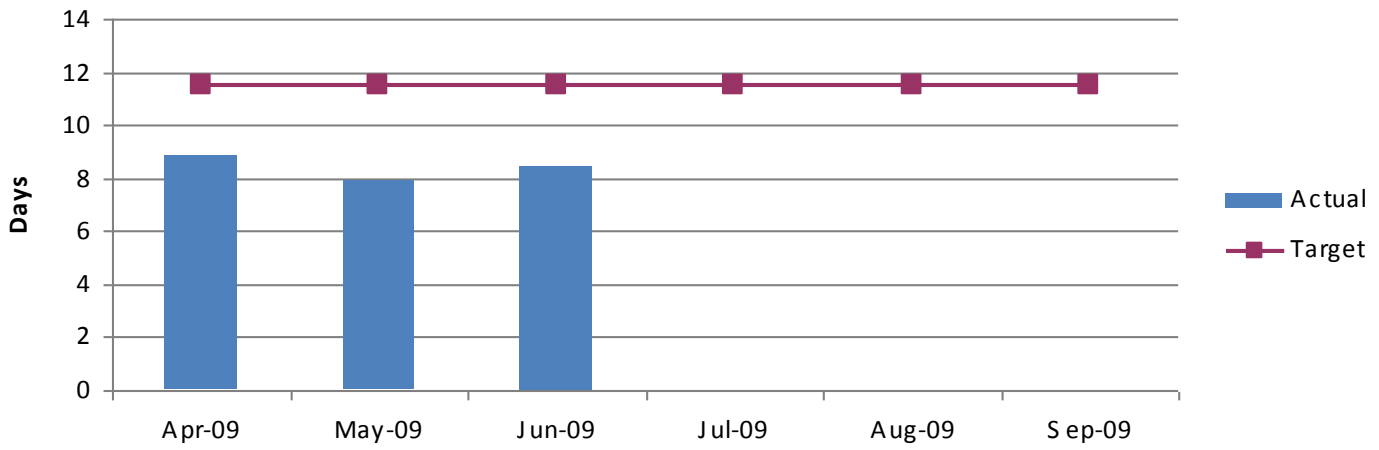


	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Blyth Actual	191	458	779	0	0	0
Blyth Target	240	490	696	887	996	1142
Alnwick Actual	50	64	80	0	0	0
Alnwick Target	70	86	102	0	0	0

Blyth continued - We have also been working together with our colleagues in Housing Management on a project to improve security and safety at our properties in Cowley Road, this will include raising the height of the rear fence, some defensive planting and additional lighting to the rear of the properties. After a series of break-ins in the area these measures should go a long way to giving our customers peace of mind.

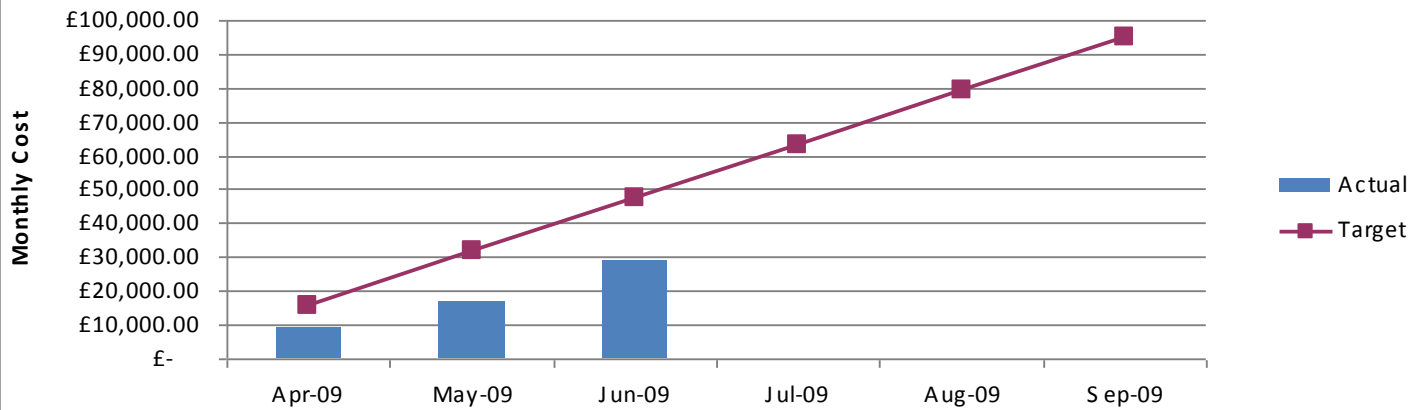
Alnwick - Unable at the present time to give information on the capital spend because of problems with the computer system. The amount of completions for the month was 16 out of a planned 16.

Average Days Lost to Sickness (FTE) - Blyth



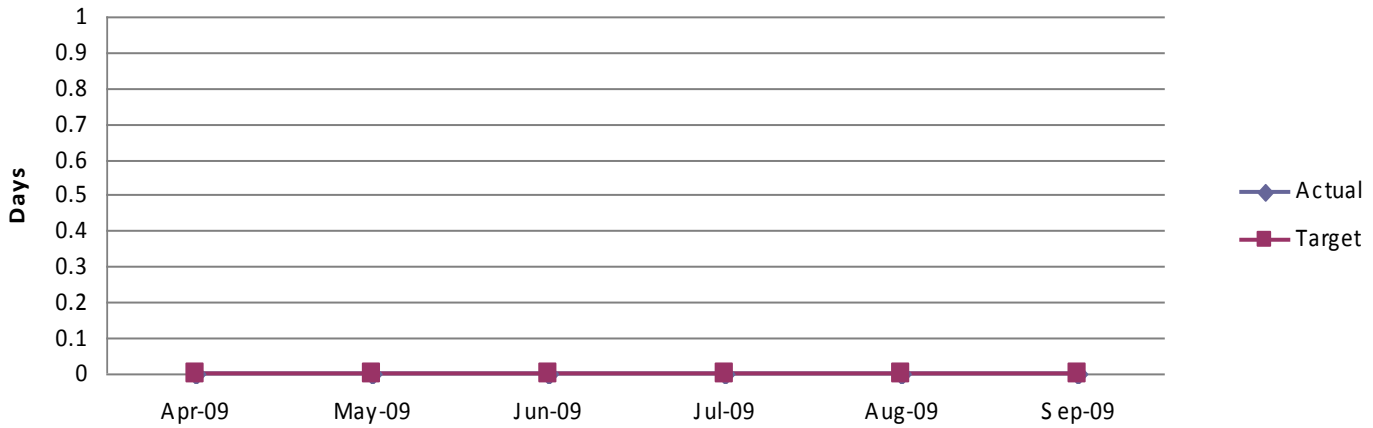
	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Quartile Indicator
Actual	8.84	7.89	8.41	0	0	0	
Target	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	

Cost of Lost Days - Blyth



	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Actual	£ 8,757.00	£ 16,680.00	£ 29,141.00	£ -	£ -	£ -
Target	£ 15,833.00	£ 31,666.00	£ 47,499.00	£ 63,332.00	£ 79,165.00	£ 94,998.00

Number of Training Days - HfN



	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09
Actual	0	0	0	0	0	0
Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

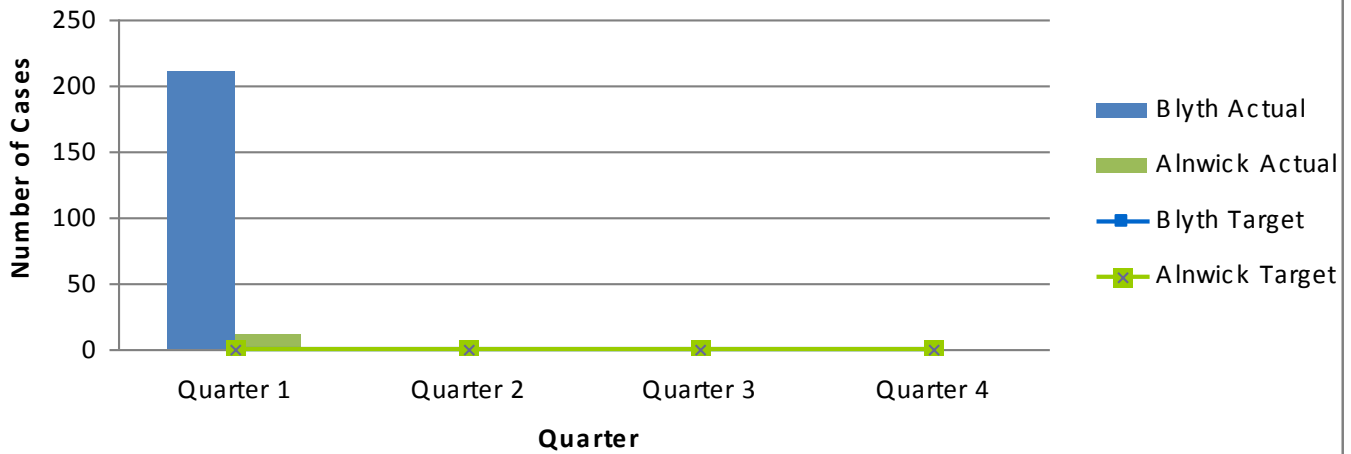
The HR figures are for Blyth Valley only. We are still unable to access sickness information for Alnwick staff, although NCC payroll are aware of this and are still trying to rectify this for us.

The 'days lost' for June are slightly higher than the previous 2 months, but comparing this First Quarter with the same quarter last year, we have had a 24% decrease on the numbers of days lost to sickness within the organisation.

We continue to have two long term sick individuals at the present time.

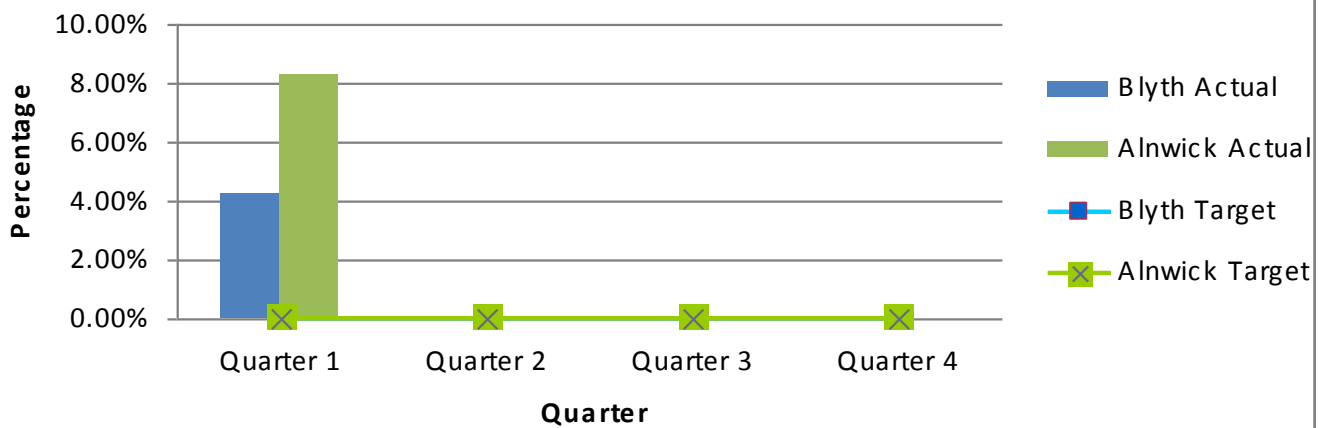
The Learning & Development Officer is currently formulating the training plan for the next two year period which will include a programme of internal and externally delivered training options for staff - ensuring that we continue to have a well trained, effective and professional team of staff offering great services to our customers.

Number of New ASB Cases



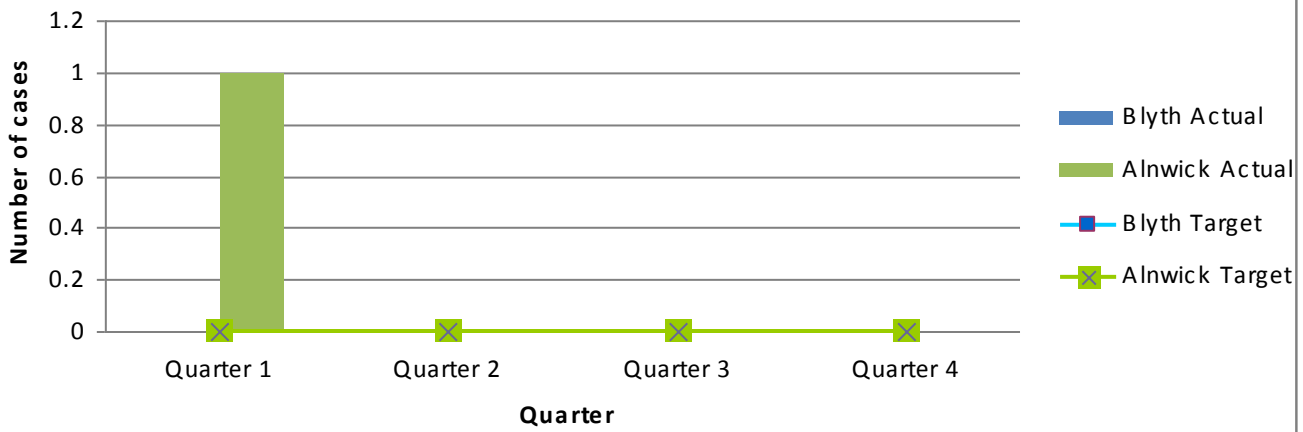
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Blyth Actual	212	0	0	0
Blyth Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alnwick Actual	12	0	0	0
Alnwick Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Percentage of Cases Resulting in Legal Action



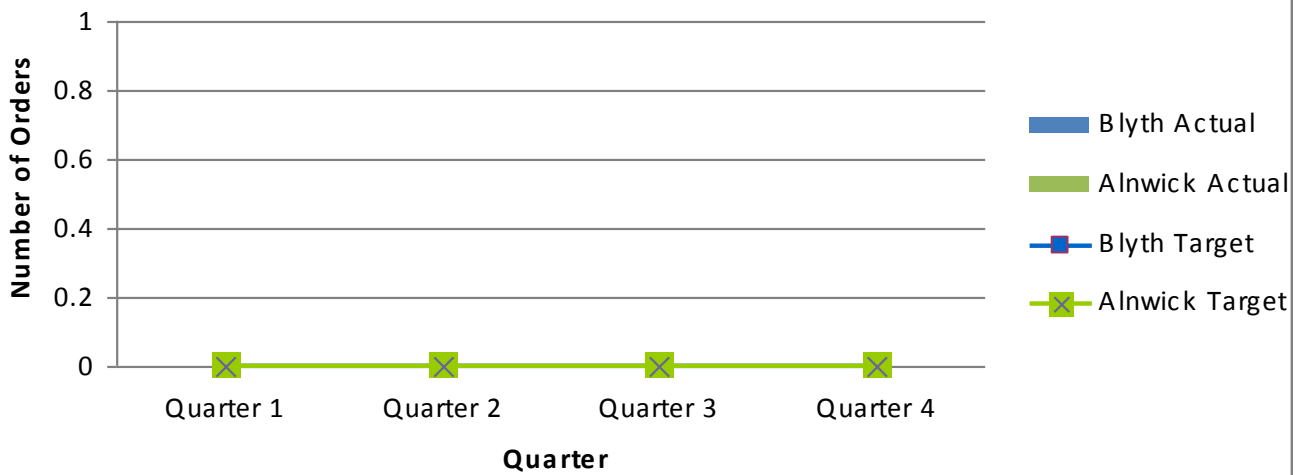
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Blyth Actual	4.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Blyth Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alnwick Actual	8.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Alnwick Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of Racial Cases



	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Blyth Actual	0	0	0	0
Blyth Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alnwick Actual	1	0	0	0
Alnwick Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of Legal Orders



	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Blyth Actual	0	0	0	0
Blyth Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alnwick Actual	0	0	0	0
Alnwick Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Blyth - The Safer Neighbourhoods Unit was taken back in house by HFN from 1st April 2009. We have a team of four which entails 1 SNU Manager, 2 SNU Officers and a seconded Housing Officer dealing with Low level cases of Anti-social Behaviour. Since 1st April 2009 SNU Manager has been managing the Tenancy and Estates Team, this ends in September 2009.

As you can see from the figures in the first quarter of the year over 200 cases have been reported to the SNU which has resulted in a number of legal actions being taken. The aim of the unit from April 2009 was to continue delivering a good and consistent service to our customers. We have continued to deliver a consistent service despite a number of uncertainties with the change to a one unitary council and changes in working shift patterns of one of our partners Northumbria Police. In April 2009 the working shift patterns of the Neighbourhood Beat Managers changed significantly where they would start their late shift at 6pm thus not being able to link in with the SNU Unit on a regular basis to discuss individuals' behaviour, share relevant intelligence and get a quick and appropriate response to deal with an issue. This caused a number of delays in dealing with a query from a customer. In the past number of weeks improvements have been made on communication between both SNU and Northumbria Police and a number of measures have been put in place to improve the service we are delivering

From September 2009 SNU manager will be looking to take the ASB service on further by looking at new initiatives, funding for these initiatives and looking at best practice around for tackling ASB to provide an excellent service for HFN customers.

We will be offering our services to schools in delivering the educational DVD on causes and effects of ASB; this is one of SNU's key aims to prevent young people engaging in ASB. Both SNU officers are trained in delivering this key message within the schools. This has not been offered since April due to lack of resources within the unit.