

## SERVICE REPORT CARD 2015-16

### HOUSING RENEWAL AND ADAPTATION SERVICE

#### Brief description of the service

The Housing Renewal and Adaption Service (HRAS) comprises of 3 main service areas with a team of 24 staff based over three offices, Tregelles court, Neath Abbey, King Edward House, Neath and Wellington Place, Aberavon. The service areas are : The Adaptation Service, Renewal Area Team and the specialist services team, the service is made up of building surveyors, support officers and administration staff.

The service benefitted from a system thinking review in 2009 and has made significant changes and improvements to suit the findings including reducing the amount of staff considerably from 44 to 24 posts. The service has a single staffing structure to allow for a flexible approach to be able to move staff to suit the current workloads and demands of the three areas of the service.

- **Adaptation service**

The provision of a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) is a statutory requirement of the Authority , which is governed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) order 2002.

The Adaptation Service provides adaptations to private home owners and tenants through Disabled Facility Grants and Rapid Adaptation Grants (RAG)

A DFG pays for essential adaptations to aid disabled people gain better freedom of movement into and around their homes by providing access to essential facilities within their home. The core group of adaptations facilitate access to the living room, bathroom, bedroom, kitchen and / or access and egress to the property.

The HRAS offers and carries out a full “in house service” to ensure the correct adaptation solution is delivered to the applicant to a high standard helping them maintain their independence and continue living in their own property for as long as possible.

The Rapid Adaptation Grant was introduced as an experiment in 2014/15; £150,000 was allocated from the Intermediate Care fund. The grant is aimed at providing replacement or emergency works to clients already known to the authority where a formal Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment is not required. (A DFG requires a formal OT assessment, waiting time approx. 4-5months)

The Adaptation service also helps to fund an Essential Access Grant (EAG) which is aimed at providing a client with a quick and simple route for minor adaptations such as grab rails, stair rails and handrails to a maximum value of £200, this grant is administered by Care & Repair and is accessed through the Gateway team where they transfer the client directly to Care & Repair.

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- **Renewal Areas and Regeneration**

The Renewal Area team is responsible for the regeneration works in the authority's declared Renewal areas as below:

- Sandfields East and Aberavon which is in its 12<sup>th</sup> out of 13<sup>th</sup> year
  - Over £10.5m of Specific Capital grant (SCG) funding spent on nearly 1000 properties
- Neath East which is in its 6<sup>th</sup> year out of 10.
  - Over £3.6m of SCG funding spent on nearly 500 properties
  - Over £4.6m of Community Energy Saving Programme funding spent on 540 properties,

The Renewal Area regeneration schemes can include external renovation works to housing such as, roofs, windows, doors, rendering and external wall insulation, plus environment and community improvements such as multi use games areas, street improvements, alley gate schemes to reduce arson and fly tipping in the rear lanes and starting youth clubs and other community groups. The renewal areas are funded by the Welsh Governments Specific Capital Grant programme.

This service is responsible for delivering the neighbourhood renewal project for the Vibrant and Viable Places programme which involves very similar renovation works and improving energy efficiency to 300 properties over the 3 year period of the programme.

- **Specialist Services**

The specialist services team deal with the income generating areas of the service which includes :

- Issuing the recyclable Houses to Homes & Home Improvement Loans,
- Carrying out and preparing Energy Performance Surveys & Green Deal assessment reports.
- Asbestos surveying
- Asbestos drawings
- Also responsible for applying for Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding to support the regeneration schemes.

**Service performance and progress on priorities, April 2015 – February 2016**

The service has two priorities included in the Corporate Improvement Plan.

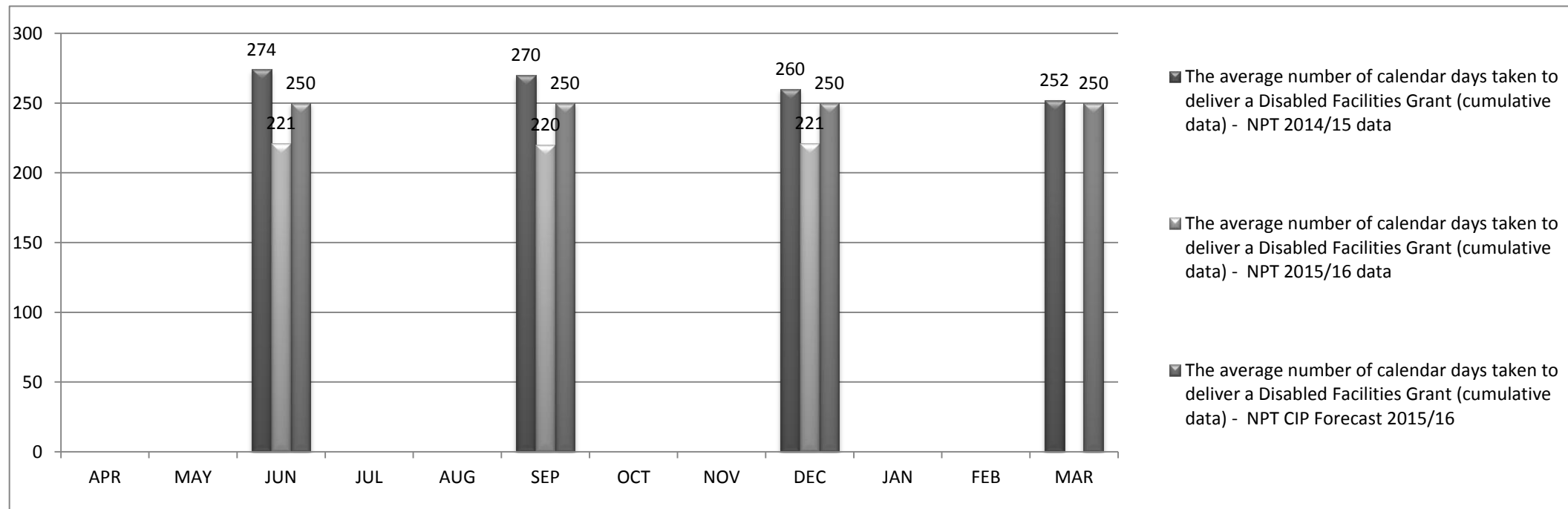
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#### Priority 1

- Improvement Objective 3 – Improving outcomes, Improving lives  
 Improve residents' ability to remain independent in their own homes through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations to houses to meet the needs of disabled residents.  
 This is measured by the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a DFG.

The table below indicates the number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facility Grant per each quarter in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

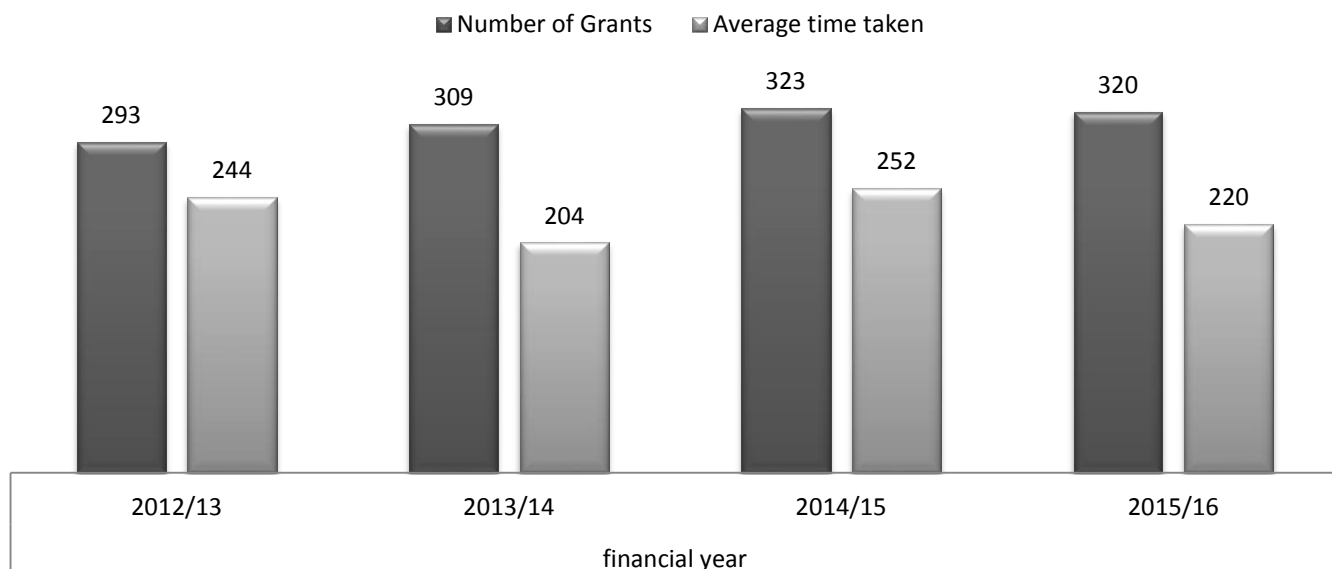


The table below indicates the number of grants completed and the average time taken for each financial year.

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#### Number of Grants / Average time taken



Wales Average 2014/15:

231 days

NPT Quarter 3 2014/15:

260 Days

NPT Quarter 3 2015/16:

221 Days

The data above indicates the process is quicker this year than last year, this can be attributed to improvements in the system and a change in the type of demand, this year the demand for extensions is down 30% compared to last year. The service is on target to show an improvement on the predicted 250 days figure for this year, it is expected the days taken will remain very similar to the current amount of 221 days.

#### Priority 2

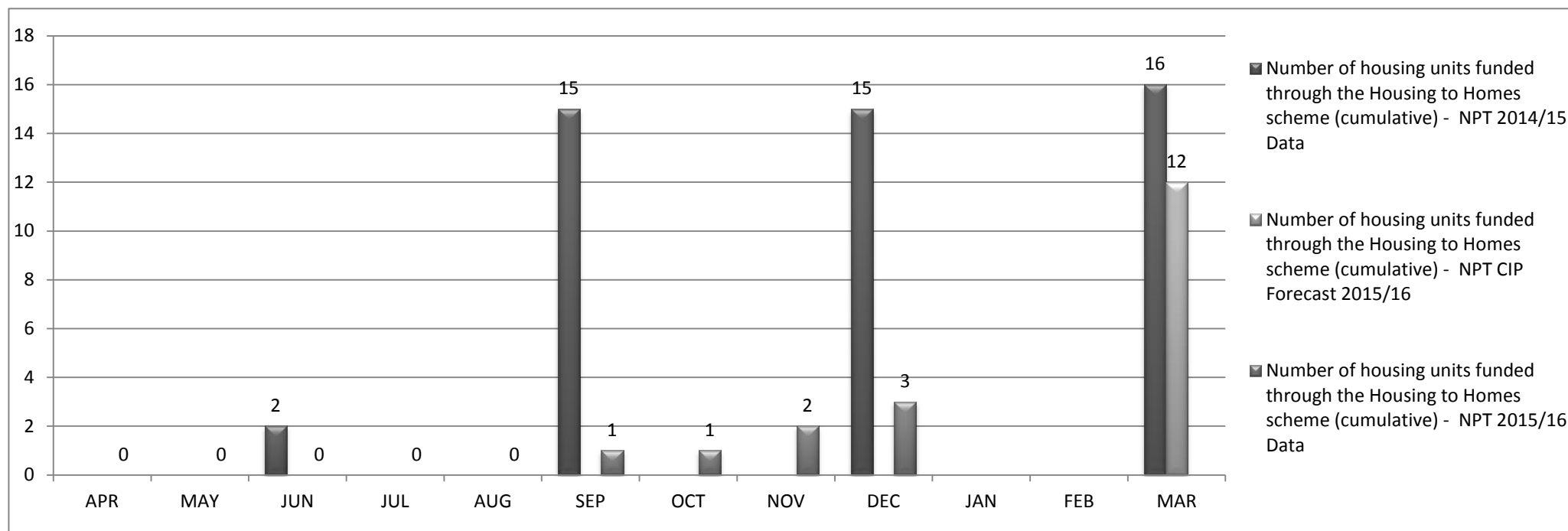
- Improvement Objective 4 – Prosperity for all  
Continue to offer the “Housing to Homes” interest free loans to encourage landlords, developers and home owners to renovate

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empty houses that have fallen into disrepair to allow them to be offered back into the housing market for sale or rent. This is measured by the number of units funded through the scheme.

The table below indicates the number of housing units funded through the Houses to Homes scheme.



This year the Houses to Homes schemes has so far brought 3 units of accommodation back into use, a further 11 units on target to be completed this financial year, with an additional 40 units at various stages in the pipeline.

The scheme is on target to achieve the forecasted figure of 12 for FY 15/16.

Below is a summary of the services key actions and progress made against each one for this financial year.

Key Actions:

- To fully spend allocated Adaptation budget.

The budget is fully committed with a number of jobs at various stages.

It is anticipated by the end of financial year that 320 grants will have been completed, this compares to 323 for 2014/15.

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The service has dealt with 448 enquiries for grant aid with 100 enquiries being cancelled; this is mainly due to financial reasons such as a contribution required or applicant not wanting to divulge finances.

Currently the end to end time from the client's first contact to the completion of works on site is 220 days this is compared to 252 for 2014/15.

The average grant is currently £6429 This is compared with £7951 for 2014/15.

The average cost and end to end time has improved due to less extensions being constructed in 15/16 compared to 14/15 and changes to the process.

- To review the DFG system

A mini review of the system was carried out which identified areas of the process that could be improved, due to losing specific skilled staff due through ER VR early in the year, some of the remaining surveyors required training on AutoCAD to ensure the process of preparing drawings was not delayed, this was successfully carried out and all surveyors are now competent with the preparation of drawings.

The benefits of having an in house Occupational Therapist (OT) were looked at in consultation with the COT (Community Occupational Therapist) manager. The benefits of reducing the applicants time on the waiting list was obvious and it was agreed to second an OT from the COT service, an OT was in post by September 2015. The in house OT is currently working on the COT service backlog, the benefits of this post should be seen early in new financial year where the OT should be responsive to request for assistance.

- To procure new framework of contractors.

The process to procure and appoint a new framework of contractors is underway, it was intended to implement new framework on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, due to the extent of the work and involvement required it is hoped to implement the new framework in the autumn of 2016. The procurement section is currently working on the requirements and application.

- To deliver the 15/16 projects identified in the operational plan for SCG funded Renewal Areas

Following approval of the SCG allocation by the Welsh Government, properties were identified and an operational plan for both Renewal Areas was developed and approved. Currently both schemes are on target for a full spend by the end of the financial year, 63 properties will have benefited from renovation works funded by SCG. This is compared to 37 from 2014/15.

- To deliver the 15/16 projects identified in the operational plan for Welsh Government funded VVP & ARBED schemes

ARBED funding was applied for and approved in September 2015; this funding was to support the Vibrant and Viable Scheme and also a standalone ARBED scheme.

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A requirement of VVP and ARBED was to also secure Energy Company Obligation Funding, this was successfully done with the support of NPower energy supplier.

Properties were identified and an operational plan put in place, All the schemes are on site and weather dependant will complete this financial year. The target amount of properties for this financial year was 150 properties; the schemes are on target to slightly exceed this amount.

- To develop and implement the process for delivering Private Sector Home Improvement Loans (HIL)

Following the final approval of the scheme by Welsh Government in late 2015, 5 HIL's have been issued to a value of approximately £33,000, with a further £200,000 worth of enquiries at different stages, it is estimated that 15 loans will be issued this financial year.

- To deliver the established Houses into Homes recyclable loan scheme

The established Houses into Homes scheme continues to be offered and 3 loans have been issued this year worth a total of £205,000 with a further £280,000 worth of applications in the pipeline at various stages. A total of 3 units have been brought back in to use during 15/16 with a further 11 due to complete before the end of this financial year, this is compared to 16 brought back into use in 14/15.

- Continue and expand income generating services

The service is in contract with Swansea Council to carry out Energy Performance Surveys on their housing stock and to carry out Green Deal Assessments on their Renewal Area schemes, this year the service has carried out over 350 Energy Performance surveys and 150 Green Deal assessments.

NPT Homes awarded the service a contract to prepare 9500 floor plans for their tenant packs indicating the location of any asbestos containing material within the property. To date over 4500 drawings have been completed.

Almost £100,000 worth of ECO funding has been secured to support the regeneration works.

#### Financial

Funding for the service is received from a number of different sources

- **Adaptation Service**

£3,000,000 from General Capital Fund.

The Adaptation Budget has remained at the same level for 6 years due to the demand for adaptations, there is always a large waiting list at the end of the financial year, by the end of this financial year the waiting list is predicted to contain approx. £1.5m worth of work.

The service is on target for a full spend of this budget by the end of the financial year.

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- **Renewal Area** receives funding from different sources as below:

£920,000 from Welsh Governments Specific Capital Grant for declared Renewal Areas

£1,295,000 from Welsh Governments ARBED fund.

£370,000 from Vibrant and Viable Places Programme

£92,500 from Npower ECO fund to support Renewal and Arbed schemes.

The Renewal Area budget has been very similar for the last 3 years. 16/17 is the final year for funding of this scheme.

The last two years has seen the service being awarded funding for additional regeneration schemes and the introduction of the loans, this has brought a substantial amount of additional money and work into the service.

The service is on target for a full and complete spend of all funds by the end of the financial year.

- **Specialist Services**

£913,238 for Houses to Homes Recyclable fund

£892,244 Home Improvement Loans – borough wide use

£600,000 Home Improvement Loans – VVP area only.

The loans are recyclable and available for a set period of time, currently £625,000 worth of loans have been allocated with a number of applications at various stages.

Currently the service is on target to generate a surplus of approximately £90,000, A vacancy saving of £25,000 has also been taken into account.

#### Employee/Staffing

- The service has not had any unplanned resignations in this financial year,
- Two staff took advantage of last year's ER/VR scheme and finished at the end of March 2015, at the same time following the expiration of an SLA with NPT Homes, two staff transferred to NPT Homes.
- All teams have regular team briefings where any issues are discussed including and learning or development needs and also ideas on how to improve processes are discussed.
- Currently not all staff have had an Employee Development Review, it is intended to complete each review by end of March 2016.

#### Sickness

- The service has had a number of long term sickness issues which along with all sickness is being closely managed and cautions issued when required.
- All staff are aware of the sickness policy and the different management stages.



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**Average FTE working days lost per Employee - Quarter 3 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016)**

Measure	2014/15 Actual (Full year)	Quarter 3 2014/15 (cumulative)	Quarter 3 2015/16 (cumulative)
Service	4.8	4.2	7.1
Directorate	11.7	8.4	9.4
Council	9.4	6.7	6.8

#### Customer

- The adaptation service carries out a customer satisfaction survey on the completion of each grant covering the key areas and how they felt the service performed, the builder and the impact the DFG adaptation has made to their lives. , since the introduction of this survey in July 2014 247 clients returned the survey.  
The results are below:
- 93% were very satisfied with the support provided by the services officers.
- 83% were very satisfied with the length of time it took to provide the adaptations
- 91% were very satisfied with the amount the client was listened to during the job
- 90% were very satisfied with the builder, quality of work, tidiness and time keeping etc.
- **96% strongly agreed that the DFG has improved their quality of life.**
- 95% strongly agree that they now feel safer at home.
- 93% strongly agree that they now feel more independent
- 92% strongly agree it is easier for family and carers to help with daily needs.
- 84% strongly agree they no longer need to consider moving house.

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**Compliments and complaints.**

There have been no complaints recorded against the service for 2015/16; it is the same for 2014/15.

No compliments have been recorded for the same periods.

The service has prided itself on working very closely with clients and contractors to ensure all processes go as smoothly as possible and deal with any issues as they arise to avoid any formal complaints being raised.

The customer satisfaction survey reflects the positive feedback the service gets.