

Benefits Improvement Plan Quarterly Report

April - June 2009

Ref	Action Area	Who	When	Position statement
R1	Improve the management and collection of all Housing Benefit overpayments.		31/01/2010	
R1a	Reviewing the roles and responsibilities for recovery.	D Taylor J Bough PDT	19/05/2009	Initial discussions and fact finding review carried out. PDT agree that processes are satisfactory. Decision required as to future location of debt recovery side – remain with Income Recovery Team, move to Benefits or move somewhere else.
R1b	Ensure that the resources needed are made available.	D Taylor J Bough	19/06/2009	PDT have recommended that additional resource made available to deliver improvement. The equivalent of 40% of a post currently works on the recovery of overpaid HB.
R2	Increase income levels of the poorest parts of the community by adopting a Take-Up Strategy.		30/09/2009	
R2a	Compile a description of roles and responsibilities to introduce Take-Up Strategy.	D Taylor PDT	19/05/2009	Work ongoing with Performance Development Team – stakeholders and potential take-up activities identified. Link to Income Maximisation group.
R2d	Clear measures of effectiveness.	D Taylor	30/06/2009	Identified benchmarking and customer surveys and LAA targets.
R3	Improve the accessibility of the Service.		31/10/2010	
R3c	Develop relationship with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's)	D Taylor	30/06/2009	Meeting planned for 24 th September 2009 – quarterly meetings to follow.
R4	Ensure challenging service standards and performance targets are in place, that are relevant to customers needs.		Interim 30/09/2009 Full 30/09/2010	
R4c	Ensure that the Service has robust plans to deliver the standards and targets.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	19/06/2009	Some challenging targets set regarding average processing times – further work being undertaken with PDT to set a broader range of performance targets. Improvement plan agreed by Council.
R4d	Ensure that the Service has the capacity to deliver them.		30/06/2009	Temporary workers as short term measure and 3 additional Benefits Officers (1 temporary) appointed as longer term measure. Additional resources to help speed up Appeal response times and to deal with increased volume.
R4e	Greater clarity for both internal and external customers as to what the Service is aiming to achieve.	T Kristunas D Taylor	30/06/2009	New Service plan identifies aims plus includes service standards – still need to include these on website – Income Maximisation group to consider the standards.

R5	Performance Improvement		31/10/2010	
R5a	Improve claim processing performance.	K Herbert	30/06/2009	Average processing times improved – 16 days for first quarter compared to 21 days last quarter. Further work required to achieve target of 13 days. The appointment of 3 additional officers will assist.
R6	Service Planning		31/12/2009	
R6b	Service Plan to be supported by a detailed action plan that identifies key activities, responsibilities and measures of success that can be recognised by customers. These should address problem areas and have specific and measurable targets, linked to staff objectives.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	19/06/2009	Partly done through improvement plan. Action plans in support of individual parts of plan still need to be prepared. Chance to link them to individuals as part of the new appraisal process.
R7	Performance Management		31/03/2010	
R7b	Improve Performance management arrangements at service level. Introduce staff performance appraisals and individual or team targets for processing staff. Measure productivity systematically. Embed new performance management.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	31/05/2009	Ongoing work with PDT to develop individual and team performance targets. Staff attended new Performance Management training. Regular update of Benefits performance provided to Senior Managers and Members.
R7f	There are not yet robust, formally adopted SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, resourced and time-based) plans in place to give clear structure to the delivery of improvement.	T Kristunas D Taylor	30/06/2009	Improvement Plan.
R11c	Compare costs to other services, calculate unit costs and seek to evaluate cost effectiveness.	D Taylor	30/06/2009	Some base work done with Herefordshire Council. It has been agreed that data will be shared between Revenues and Benefits Managers across the County. No data received to date.
R13	System and System Reports		30/06/2010	
R13b	Improve HB/CTB Subsidy Claim processes. Introduce testing of software releases and regular testing of claim accuracy during the year to ensure that subsidy calculation is accurate.	D Taylor I Spratt	06/05/2009	Some extra work done but difficult to resource – IBS reconciliation spreadsheet completed for 2008/09 claim. Subsidy claim run monthly. LA error and expenditure looked at. Work needs to be extended to other areas.