

THE NEW HOUSING BENEFIT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report follows from the report discussed by members in April. It is the first opportunity to score ourselves against the new Housing Benefit Performance Standards (HBPS) that were launched in March 2005
- 1.2 This Committee monitors progress towards achieving the standards on a six-monthly basis in July and December. This report will explain what the new HBPS are and how they link into a score for the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) and how that links into the overall CPA score.
- 1.3 The appendices to this report will give members an up-to-date position and score against the new standards and will also show in an action plan how the Benefit team intends to meet all of the standards over a set period of time

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Performance Standards were first launched in April 2002 as a result of a commitment given by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop a performance framework for Housing Benefit (HB) in their response to the *Housing Green Paper* (published November 2000).
- 2.2 In April members were given a report showing the changes to the HBPS reducing the standards from 641 different questions to 19 performance measures and 65 enablers. The new standards would be split into just four themes instead of the previous seven. These themes are:
 - **Claims Administration** – claims processing, quality and reducing error and overpayments. (16 enablers & 9 performance measures)
 - **Security** – security of administration, counter-fraud activities, and sanctions. (21 enablers & 7 performance measures)
 - **User Focus** – take-up, customer service, and appeals and complaints. (12 enablers and 3 performance measures)
 - **Resource Management** – strategic management, value for money, and assurance. (16 enablers no performance measures).
- 2.3 The new scoring methodology has been designed to give:
 - More weight to those parts of the standards which underpin the delivery of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets for improving the speed of Housing

and Council Tax benefit claims and reducing the level of fraud and error.

- Credit for partial achievement against the standards set for the performance measures.
- Recognition that some of the performance measures need reviewing as authorities are recording performance differently so four of the claims administration performance measures and three of the security performance measures are not currently being scored whilst they are under review

2.4 The themes are weighted as follows:-

Theme	Weight for Enablers	Weight for Performance Measures
Claims Administration	35%	50%
Security	35%	35%
User Focus	15%	15%
Resource Management	15%	0%

2.5 The performance measures are graded between 1 and 4. The total performance measure score is also graded between 1 and 4 and is calculated from the weighted average of the individual performance measures score. Appendix 1 shows our current score against the performance measures

2.6 The overall enabler score is also graded between 1 and 4 and is calculated by finding the percentage of enablers achieved in each theme, and combining these using the weights. Appendix 2 shows our current score against the enablers

2.7 The overall score is derived by combining the total enabler score and the total performance measure score, using a matrix. Appendix 3 shows our current overall score.

2.8 The Head of Service described this scoring and assessment in more detail in his report of 7th April. However, Members are reminded that on Appendix 2 the “Theme Score” (6th Column) on the “Enablers” matrix is arrived at by assessing achievement against the following model:-

0 – 25%	1
26 – 50%	2
51 – 75%	3
76 – 100%	4

3 IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- 3.1 Appendix 4 is our Improvement Plan to meet all of the New Housing Benefit Performance Standards. It shows the date by which it is intended to be achieved and the officer(s) responsible and the amount of time that will be needed to achieve the standard.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To endorse the improvement plan which will be monitored on a 6 monthly cycle.
 - (2) To endorse the self assessment score of 3 (good).

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Head of Revenue & Housing Management

Background Papers:-

2005 HB/CTB Performance Standards

Various DWP Directives and Statutory Instruments

Letter to leader of Council from Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Work and Pensions

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