

# CUSTOMER SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN

## HOUSING BENEFITS

### BFI Recommendations

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
1. Strategic Management						

## BFI Recommendations

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
1. Ensures that as part of its review of strategic and operational planning that targets are included for processing of claims	2.13	Review BVPI performance with Cumbrian and 'like' authorities	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager		<p>Outturn and first quarter details obtained from Cumbria LAs</p> <p>All Cumbria authorities to meet to identify best practice from Performance Standards self assessment facilitated by BFI PDT</p>
		Include agreed targets in Service Plan	CLOSED		Targets included in Service Plan and issued	Service Plan and Performance Management Framework issued
		Design and publish service standards and expectations for users	CLOSED		Service standards published	Service Standards issued for consultation 20 April 05. Now into corporate arena

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
2. Produces an operational plan that clearly shows what actions will be taken, and by what dates, to achieve its targets		Development of Service plan including consultation with Service Managers and key stakeholders	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Published Service Plan  Action plan, arising from BFI visit, produced.	Service Plan and Performance Management Framework issued  Action Plan approved by Executive, 10 March 05. monitored quarterly by Overview and Scrutiny Committee
3. Reflects performance targets in individual work objectives which should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound		Development of Service plan including consultation with Service Managers and key stakeholders  Reissue of performance Management Framework	CLOSED  CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and  Team Leaders	Targets included in Service Plan  Updated Performance Management Framework issued to staff	Revised targets set within Benefits Recovery Plan.  Performance Framework issued in revised and updated format. Further updated August 2005

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
4. Monitors progress against its targets at a service and individual staff level		Improve output reports from Systems	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Comprehensive daily service status report	Academy reporting structure in place within batch scheduler  Anite reports updated following consultation with Carlisle City Council  Partnership working with BFI PDT.
		Standing item at: Revenues and Benefits Management Team	CLOSED	Team Leaders	Notes of Revenues and Benefits Management Team Meetings	Revenues and Benefits Management Team meetings in place
		-Benefits Management Team	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	Notes of Benefit Managers Meetings	Introduced as standing item on Benefit Management Team agenda
		-One to Ones	CLOSED		Notes of individual one to ones held by appropriate line managers	One to Ones commenced
		-Appraisals	CLOSED		Notes of Appraisals on individual staff personnel files	Appraisals completed 10 June 2005

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
<p>5. Develops HB and CTB delivery procedures that cover all aspects of the Benefits service and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all legal requirements</li> <li>• Departmental circulars</li> </ul>	2.24	<p>Review and revise existing practice and help notes into single comprehensive document</p> <p>Design and production of advice and information leaflets for service users</p>	<p>Oct 05</p> <p><b>CLOSED</b></p>	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Financial Controls Technical Officer	<p>Procedural manual published</p> <p>Leaflets on display in public access areas</p>	<p>Framework to BS standards for Manual established and rationalisation of existing content has commenced</p> <p>Leaflets issued for consultation and subsequent production Some leaflet produced. Web pages further revised.</p> <p>FAQs produced.</p>

## BFI Recommendations

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
6. Ensures that procedures accurately reflect actual working practices and translate local policy into practical steps for delivery		Creation of working practice quality group with representation from all staff groups and users	CLOSED	Financial Controls Technical Officer and Quality Group	Effective and usable manual	First meeting of group held, dealing with claim effective dates - as impacted on BVPI
			CLOSED		Month on month improvement in accuracy rates to 99% plus by March 06.	Further monthly meetings scheduled  Target set April 05

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
7. Incorporates changes and amendments to procedures within 10 days of receipt		<p>Prompt internal distribution of legislative changes received to Financial Controls Technical Officer</p> <p>Legislative changes given priority over other work</p> <p>Validation by Senior Financial Controls Officer</p>	<p><b>CLOSED</b></p> <p>Subject to service needs</p> <p>Completed and in place</p>	<p>Senior Financial Controls Officer, and</p> <p>Financial Controls Technical Officer</p>	Procedural documents produced on time	Changes are generally introduced within this timescale but formal procedures need to be developed to provide necessary evidence
8. Establishes a formal management control process for developing and changing local procedures to ensure that only current guidance is available to staff		Introduce version release control to BS standards!	<b>CLOSED</b>	Senior Financial Controls Officer	Physical evidence	Framework to BS for Manual established and update/rationalisation of existing content commenced

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
<b>9. Ensures written procedural guidance is available to all staff and confirms that all Benefits delivery procedures are fully understood by both managers and staff</b>		On line availability	Dec 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, Technical Support Officer, and	Access to all users	Framework for Manual established and updating/rationalisation of existing content commenced
		Use of testing analyses	CLOSED	Financial Controls Technical Officer	Results of Training needs Analysis Academy Skill-wise reports	Re-run of Training needs analysis completed Dec 04. Showed improvement to above industry standard.
		Validation by Quality Officer	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, and Financial Controls Technical Officer	Revised procedures for Quality Officer and Assessment Team Leader  Month on month improvement in accuracy rates to 99% plus by March 06.	Revised arrangements completed August 2005  Target set April 05



**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
<p>10. Uses a formal work measurement methodology to develop specific targets for each Benefits processing task and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assigns complexity weightings to each task to allow the differing experience and skill levels of staff to be taken into account when setting individual work targets for them</li> <li>• assigns priorities to tasks to reflect their urgency</li> <li>• introduces targets for the assessment team</li> </ul>	2.32	Formal review of work measurement to identify best practice	Nov 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	<p>Methodology that reflects local circumstances agreed.</p> <p>EDMS target completion dates revised</p> <p>Performance Management reports improved.</p> <p>Month on month improvement to processing days for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new claims</li> <li>- change of circumstances</li> </ul> <p>Target set for average of 10% improvement per quarter starting July/Sept 05 quarter</p>	<p>Targets already in place although based on historical and industry standard levels of productivity</p> <p>Meetings and workshops held on site with BFI PDT.22/23 September 2005</p> <p>Further discussion required with BFI PDT as approach proposed by PDT differs from BFI main report recommendations</p> <p>Target set</p>

## BFI Recommendations

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
11. Collects, analyses and uses management information available from all HB and CTB systems to assist continuous improvement		Design and develop - daily service status report - weekly KPI monitoring , and - monthly service plan and review	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	Each document produced and in use in - management reporting - one to ones	Further improvements to reporting in place from August 2005.  Further development of Anite completed  Revised MIS introduced from September outturns

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
<p>12.Reviews its obligations under the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 Act and takes action to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify and consult with local ethnic minority groups, or their representatives, to establish clearly both the needs for and expectations of the Benefits service, and takes appropriate actions to satisfy them</li> </ul>	2.48	To form part of corporate review	<b>CLOSED</b>	Head of Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Race Equalities Statement issued	Within corporate arena. No further benefits specific action until corporate policies established. Target dates unknown .

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
13.Consults with other functions within the council that are concerned in any way with the work of the Benefits service to define clearly its working arrangements with them	2.51	Areas identified as:  Copeland Direct  Council Tax and Recovery    Housing Strategy and Homelessness Team	<b>CLOSED</b>	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	Merger of Copeland Direct, Council Tax and Recovery into a single Department.      Revised operational arrangements with Housing and Homelessness	Merger took place as at 1 June 05 as part of corporate re-structure. Assimilation process completed .      Regular meetings with Homelessness Team and SLA drafted
14.Specifies clearly what is expected from all parties and how the arrangements will be monitored		Introduction of SLAs to include escalation procedures	Oct 05  Revised to Nov 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Signed SLAs  Minutes of review meetings	Draft to be issued at Liaison Meeting on 4 November 2005
15.Formally reports on the success of the arrangements, agreeing and taking action where monitoring shows this is needed		Identify reporting process  SLAs to detail remedial action process	Oct 05  Revised to Nov 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Signed SLAs  Minutes of review meetings discussed at Revenues and Benefits Service Management Team	Contingent on actions in Proposal number 14.

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
16.Establishes formal arrangements with landlords to ensure it has effective working arrangements with them to support customers in claims processing	2.57	Re-introduction of regular Landlord Forum  SLAs introduced	<b>CLOSED</b>  Ongoing	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Minutes of review meetings  SLA signed	First meeting with landlords on 4 Nov 2005.
17.Makes similar arrangements with other relevant external welfare organisations		Introduction of welfare advisers forum  SLAs introduced	<b>CLOSED</b>  Ongoing	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Minutes of review meetings  Signed SLAs	First meeting with welfare advisers on 4 Nov 2005.
2. Processing of Claims						
1. Reviews its current claim form in line with the Department's HBCTB1	3.13	Revise existing form in line with HBCTB1 but also to reflect local circumstances	Jun 05	Revenues Project Team	Revised form in use	Claim form reviewed by BFI PDT and changes identified. Order to be place by end October 2005

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
<b>2. Ensures adequate supplies of HB and CTB claim forms are provided to its:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reception points</li> <li>• Registered Social Landlords and other welfare organisations</li> </ul>		<p>Controlled release of documentation at appropriate service points to reduce potential for fraud</p> <p>Consider use of e-forms</p>	<p>Jun 05</p> <p>Dec 05</p>	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Forms available on demand from several sources	<p>Sufficient supply of existing forms in stock</p> <p>Preliminary discussions held with eform suppliers.</p>
<b>3. Adds version controls to the form to ensure that only the current version is used</b>		Introduce document control process to BS standards	Jun 05	Senior Financial Controls Officer	New forms printed and available.	Awaits re-design of new form.
<b>4. Ensures that the additional guidance notes are always issued with the form</b>		To be incorporated in redesign of form	Jun 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	New forms printed and available.	Existing guidance to be reviewed and print order placed by end of April 05 as interim measure.

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
5. Analyses the reasons for claims being made without all the supporting information or evidence and takes appropriate action.		Improve management information	Ongoing	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Customer Services Manager	10% reduction in % of incomplete claims by Oct 05	Complete rate now validated as 40% and considered above Cumbria 'average'
		Undertake statistical evaluation.	Ongoing		Target set for average of 10% improvement per quarter commencing July/Sept 05 for processing days for new claims and changes in circumstances	Work commenced. Now identifying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of requests for further information issued</li> <li>- number of callers to office</li> <li>- reasons for visit to office</li> </ul>
		Carry out user surveys	Ongoing		Improved customer satisfaction ratings	Further action will depend on outcome of statistical data analysis
		Wide consultation on form design	Ongoing		Reduction in customer contact	Joint monitoring exercise with Home Housing in place to identify impact of HA input on form completion
		Improve clarity of guidance notes adopting 'Plain English' standards	Ongoing			

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
<b>6 Improves workflow management by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring work is prioritised on receipt</li> <li>taking early action to request additional information</li> <li>issuing reminders before 28 days has elapsed</li> <li>producing exception reports that identify the length and reasons for processing delays</li> </ul>	3.26	Improve quality and use of EDMS reports	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	Reduction in callers	Revised reports in place
		Team Leader responsible for control and flow of work to assessors	CLOSED		Reduction in elapsed processing time	Backlog work to off-site resources for processing
		Regular review of outstanding work at Benefit Managers Meeting	CLOSED		Reduction in Subsidy 'penalties'	Approach for current work follows BFI PDT recommendations
		Revised assessment process introduced	CLOSED		Reports show improved status.	Parameters set in new system as at April 05 go live.



**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
<p><b>7. Ensures that its new Benefits IT system provides reports which identify:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• backlogs of work</li> <li>• where delays occur</li> <li>• claims not being actioned within prescribed timescales</li> <li>• performance, for the team and individual staff</li> </ul>	3.37	Process review when new software fully installed	Sept 05	Head of Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, Senior Financial Controls Officer , and Team Leaders	<p>No evidence of backlog</p> <p>Improved BVPIs</p> <p>Improved productivity</p>	<p>Academy performance and BVPI reports now functional and produced weekly</p> <p>Anite reports revised and functional</p> <p>Awaiting further input from BFI PDT</p> <p>Revised reporting mechanisms distributed.</p>
<b>8. Adopts the Verification Framework</b>		Roll out to be planned following full implementation of new systems	Oct 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	VF compliance	<p>VF introduced for visiting</p> <p>VF module within Academy and Anite</p>

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
9. Ensures that all staff are trained on the latest Verification Framework evidence requirements	3.53	To follow full implementation of new systems	Nov 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	Improved accuracy on quality checks Month on month improvement in accuracy rates to 99% plus by March 06.	Guidance on evidential processes re-issued. VF training to planned prior to full VF implementation . Target set
10.Ensures that identity is confirmed in all cases		Reminder and further guidance to staff	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, Team Leaders and Financial Controls Technical Officer	Improved accuracy on quality checks  Month on month improvement in accuracy rates to 99% plus by March 06.	Staff reminded and guidance issued.  Now part of QA by Team Leader and Quality Officer Target set
11.Records evidence seen, on its Benefits IT system, to support accuracy and quality checks		Reminder and further guidance to staff	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, Team Leaders and Financial Controls Technical Officer	Improved accuracy on quality checks  Month on month improvement in accuracy rates to 99% plus by March 06.	Staff reminded and guidance issued  Now forms part of QA by Team Leader and Quality Officer as covered in consultation document issued March 05  Target set

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
12.Measures and monitors performance for dealing with customers' enquiries to ensure local standards are met.	3.61	Monitoring of reason for caller visit and/or phone call	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, Customer Services Manager and Team Leaders	5% month on month reduction in repeat visits/callers  Improvement in customer satisfaction at next BV review	Further development of roles agreed as part of Benefits Recovery Plan  Monitoring introduced to identify key reasons for customer contact.  FAQs rewritten.
		Call back to check customer experience of contact	CLOSED			
		Improve advice to customers	Ongoing			
		Improve provision of information from systems and ease of access and understanding	Ongoing			
		FAQs to be developed	CLOSED			
13.Meets its statutory requirement to make referrals to the Rent Officer within 3 days, or as soon as practicable thereafter	3.69	Focus in quality assurance	Ongoing	Team Leader	Monitoring statistics	Targets introduced in line with 2005/6 SLA  Forms part of QA by Team Leader and Quality Officer
		Reminder issued to staff	CLOSED			

**BFI Recommendations**

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
14. Makes a decision on referrals received from the Rent Officer within 2 days		Focus in quality assurance  Reminder issued to staff	Ongoing  <b>CLOSED</b>	Team Leader	Monitoring statistics	Targets introduced in line with 2005/6 SLA  Forms part of QA by Team Leader and Quality Officer
15. Ensures that a 10% check of all work processed is carried out pre-notification	3.113	Revise working arrangements and focus of current QA work carried out	<b>CLOSED</b>	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Senior Financial Controls Officer	Improvement in BVPI accuracy	Checking process revised Aug 2005 to take account of changes to checking % issued by DWP  Signed up July 2005 as a pilot authority for Academy QA Module
16. Ensures that the work of all staff is subject to such checks		Revise working arrangements and focus of current QA work carried out	Ongoing	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Senior Financial Controls Officer	Improvement in BVPI accuracy	Checking process revised Aug 2005 to take account of changes to checking % issued by DWP  Further checks to be carried out by Team Leader and Quality Officer as covered in consultation document issued March 05

# BFI Recommendations

	Report Reference	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Action/progress at 31 October 2005
17. Gathers data to identify areas of weakness to inform the targeting of future management checks and establish any training requirements.		Revise working arrangements and focus of current QA work carried out	CLOSED	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Senior Financial Controls Officer	Improvement in BVPI accuracy	<p>Checking process revised Aug 2005 to take account of changes to checking % issued by DWP</p> <p>First meeting of group held, dealing with claim effective dates - as impacted on BVPI and first training session held</p> <p>Further monthly meetings scheduled</p>

# CUSTOMER SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN

## HOUSING BENEFITS (PART 2)

### Key Items within Other Action and Service Plans

**From Financial Services Service Plan 2004/5**

[illegible]

**From Financial Services Service Plan 2004/5**

	2004/5 Target	Outturn 2004/5	Comments on 2004/5 Out-turn	Responsible Person(s)	Estimated Target 2005/6	Q 1 2005/6	Q 2 2005/6	Q 3 2005/6	Q 4 2005/6
<b>A) New Claims</b>	42 days	66 days	Targets based on new software being available for last quarter.2004/5 Implementation delayed to first quarter 2005/6.	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Team Leaders	36 days	70.1 days	83.8 days		
<b>B) Changes of Circumstances</b>	20 days	15 days			12 days	31 days	42.9 days		
<b>3. BVPI 79 Accuracy.</b>									
<b>A) Claims</b>	95.0%	90.6%	Targets based on new software being available for last quarter.2004/5 Implementation delayed to first quarter 2005/6.  B2 and B3 are new indicators	Assessment Team Leaders	98.0%	97.4	89.7		
<b>Recovery of Overpayments</b>				Recovery and Overpayments Team Leader					
<b>B1 % collection current year</b>	85.0%	76.5%			85.0%	69	70.3		
<b>B2 % collection all years</b>	n/a	n/a				42.0	27.8		
<b>B3 % written -off</b>	n/a	n/a				0.0	0.04		

From Financial Services Service Plan 2004/5

4. BVPI 80. Satisfaction with the Benefits Service	2003/4 Target	2003/4 Outturn	Note that this review is only carried out every 3 years	Responsible Person(s)	Target 2005/6	Note that these have been introduced as a Local Performance Indicator for 2005/6.BVPI assessment due in 2006/7
A) Contact with the Office	91.0%	80%	2001/2 outturn 81%	Customer Services Manager	95.0%	New Customer Services Department created to provide focus on Customers' needs
B) Service in the Office	92.0%	80.0%	2001/2 outturn 81.0%	Team Leaders	95.0%	New Customer Services Department created to provide focus on Customers' needs
C) Telephone Contact with the Office	83.0%	68.0%	2001/2 outturn 68.0%	Team Leaders	85.0%	New Customer Services Department created to provide focus on Customers' needs
D) Staff in the Office	89.0%	81.0%	2001/2 outturn 80.0%	Team Leaders	90.0%	Recent and ongoing investment in staff training
E) Clarity of forms used by the Office	72.0%	62.0%	2001/2 outturn 65.0%	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	80.0%	Forms part of review, details of which are set out in Part 1, to attain Plain English award
F) Speed of Service	82.0%	69.0%	2001/2 outturn 74.0%	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	90.0%	New Customer Services Department created to provide focus on Customers' needs
G) Overall Satisfaction Office	80.0%*	78.0%		ALL	90.0%	New Customer Services Department created to provide focus on Customers' needs  Recent and ongoing investment in staff training  Forms to be reviewed as set out in Part 1, to attain Plain English award



# From Financial Services Service Plan 2004/5

5. Local Prudential Indicators	2004/5 Target	2004/5 Outturn		Responsible Person(s)	Target 2005/6	
A) Total debt outstanding analysed by age	Not set	Not applicable	These were not set in 2004/5 but targets have now been set for 2005/6.	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	85% in year; 95% of previous years	Now part of BVPI B2 above Old debts to be transferred to Academy system to facilitate monitoring
B) Debt outstanding as % of debt raised over last 12 months	Not set	Not applicable	These were not set in 2004/5 but targets have now been set for 2005/6.	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	85%	Now BVPI B1 Old debts to be transferred to Academy system to facilitate monitoring
C) Debt written off in year	Not set	Not applicable	These were not set in 2004/5 but targets have now been set for 2005/6.	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Less than 2.5%	Now BVPI B3 Old debts to be transferred to Academy system to facilitate monitoring

## 6. Key Objectives

A) Continue Change Programme in Accordance with Project Plan	Adhere to Project Plan	Slippage in some areas	CLOSED	Revenues Project Team	Revised Timetable issued April 2005.	Completion of remaining issues by June 2005.  Signed off by Committee
B) New Software Implemented	December 2004	Implemented End March 2005	CLOSED	Revenues Project Team	N/A	Signed off by Committee  New releases to be implemented on time

# CUSTOMER SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN

## HOUSING BENEFITS (PART 3)

### Outstanding Items from 2005 Performance Standards Gap Analysis

#### Pre 2005 Performance Standards Gap Analysis

	Ref. No.	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Position at 31 March 2005
<b>1 Strategic Management</b>						
Targets should be introduced for time taken to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reply to correspondence</li> <li>• Answer telephone calls</li> <li>• Deal with customers</li> </ul>	OPS1	To be considered and set by Customer Services Management Team, pending sanction of draft Council Policy	Apr 05	Customer Services Management Team	Publication of Service Standards	Planned to be issued with other service standards as set out in response to BFI report
<b>4 Working with Landlords</b>						
Staff should be aware of leaflets and have the ability to distribute them easily.	OPS2	Leaflets to be developed. See main response to BFI report	Apr 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Leaflets on display and freely available to users	Leaflets will be available Nov 05

## Pre 2005 Performance Standards Gap Analysis

	Ref. No.	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Position at 31 March 2005
Provide positive guidance to staff to provide information to landlords in direct payment cases where requirements for claimant consent are met. .	OPS3	Review letters provided within new software to ensure that all required information is provided to landlords and current guidance to staff	Jun 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Feedback from Landlords Forum	Landlords Forum on 4 November
<b>5 Internal Security</b>						
New staff should be vetted in accordance with Audit Commission recommendations.	OPS4	To be reviewed as part of Corporate recruitment and selection process	Aug 05	Head of Customer Services	Formal procedures in place	
The Council should assess its procedures for vetting staff and establish that they are equal to, if not greater than those recommended by Audit Commission.	OPS5	To be reviewed as part of Corporate recruitment and selection process	Aug 05	Head of Customer Services	Formal procedures in place	

## Pre 2005 Performance Standards Gap Analysis

	Ref. No.	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Position at 31 March 2005
Declarations of interest should be required from new staff.	OPS6	To be reviewed as part of Corporate recruitment and selection process	Aug 05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Personnel	Formal procedures in place	Form designed  Most existing staff have completed declarations but Council's legal adviser says requirement not enforceable
When contractors are used the Council should have assurances that they are subject to similar checks.	OPS7	To be reviewed as part of Corporate recruitment and selection process	Aug 05	Head of Customer Services	Formal procedures in place	Form designed  Most existing staff have completed declarations but Council's legal adviser says requirement unenforceable
There should be an internal guide identifying the checks required on new recruits.	OPS8	To be reviewed as part of Corporate recruitment and selection process	Aug 05	Head of Customer Services	Formal procedures in place	
Vetting procedures should be reviewed at least annually to ensure they meet good practice.	OPS9	To be reviewed as part of Corporate recruitment and selection process	Aug 05	Head of Customer Services	Formal procedures in place	

## Pre 2005 Performance Standards Gap Analysis

	Ref. No.	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Position at 31 March 2005
The Council should ensure that an independent body, such as Internal Audit, annually reviews all recruitment and vetting procedures.	OPS10	To be raised at Corporate Management Team as impacts across all Departments	Aug 05	Head of Customer Services	Corporate decision	
There should be evidence of additional random spot checks, made throughout the financial year, on how key controls operate.	OPS11	Pro-forma to be drawn up and validated.  Audit to incorporate into Service Plan	June 05	Financial Controls Technical Officer and Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	Formal procedures in place	Audit heavily involved in balancing and reconciliation on Data conversion from Northgate to Academy
Recommendations from IA and EA should be acted upon within the time scales determined by management responsible for HB and CTB administration.	OPS12	None, as this is a standard requirement.  Monitoring is now undertaken by Head of Customer Services	Ongoing	Head of Customer Services	Reduction in items outstanding from Audit Reports	<a href="#">Earlier recommendations now cleared.</a>  Existing arrangements require service manager to identify target dates for implementation of agreed recommendations.  Process subject to member review.

## Pre 2005 Performance Standards Gap Analysis

	Ref. No.	Proposed action	Date Action by	Responsible Person(s)	Evidence that action completed	Position at 31 March 2005
Landlords receiving direct payments should confirm that claimants are still resident in the property.	OPS13	Diary entries to be made to conduct regular reviews.  Calls to be made to property by visiting staff.	Sept05	Revenues and Benefits Service Manager and Support Services Team Leader	Notes of visits made	New visiting team set-up as part of restructure. Visits to be incorporated into workload.