

Benefits Service Implementation  
Plan for Audit Commission  
Recommendations  
2011/12

Objective	Task/Actions	Lead Officer	Target Date	Link to Audit Commission Recommendation	Exceptions/Update
Identify whether or not opening hours and facilities at customer contact centre's are meeting the needs of customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake Review of opening hours and facilities at customer contact centre's</li> <li>• Provide report of findings</li> </ul>	John Rogers	Sept 2011	R1/Audit Commission Recommendation  <i><b>Improving service to customers</b></i>	
Reduce time taken to deal with customer complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate timescales within councils complaint procedure</li> </ul>	Nina Wilton	June 2011	R1/Audit Commission Recommendation  <i><b>Improving service to customers</b></i>	<b>ACTION Completed</b>  Timescales implemented March 2011
Work with partners to enable them to accept and verify claims/evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• Issue guidance notes</li> <li>• Provide training</li> <li>• Establish SLA</li> </ul>	Rob Daley	Sept 2011	R1/Audit Commission Recommendation  <i><b>Improving service to customers</b></i>	
Ensure benefit information is easily available and understandable on the Council website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update website</li> <li>• Ensure assistance for those for whom English is not first language is publicised</li> </ul>	Rob Daley	Sept 2011	R1/Audit Commission Recommendation  <i><b>Improving service to customers</b></i>	

Develop a shortened claim form for when customers change address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify scope of shortened form</li> <li>Prepare draft and consult with stakeholders and customers</li> <li>Roll out shortened form</li> </ul>	Louise Streater	Oct 2011	R1/Audit Commission Recommendation  <b><i>Improving service to customers</i></b>	
Improve service by developing challenging service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with customers to identify what they consider important</li> <li>Implement meaningful service standards and challenging targets</li> </ul>	Julie Higinbotham	Oct 2011	R1 & R2/Audit Commission Recommendation  <b><i>Improving service to customers</i></b>  <b><i>Strengthening performance management and planning</i></b>	Note: May be difficult to fully monitor by Oct 2011 due to lack of management information particularly in relation to phone systems.  Questionnaire may identify key concerns /issues
Complete and publish equality impact assessments for service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake EIA Benefit Take Up Strategy with support from Sharon Brookes (Equality and Diversity Policy Officer)</li> </ul>	Julie Higinbotham	July 2011	R1/Audit Commission Recommendation  <b><i>Improving service to customers</i></b>  <b><i>Strengthening performance management and planning</i></b>	Sanction policy – equality impact assessment completed and published February 2011

<p>Develop ways of engaging with service users to understand their diverse needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop consultation strategy with customers and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Issue questionnaires to customers and stakeholders in conjunction with The Research and Intelligence Team</li> </ul>	<p>Julie Higinbotham</p>	<p>Nov 2011</p>	<p>R1 &amp; R2/Audit Commission Recommendation</p> <p><b><i>Improving service to customers</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Strengthening performance management and planning</i></b></p>	
<p>Involve staff and stakeholders in development of service plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake swot analysis with all staff:</li> </ul> <p>Fraud North hub South West East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek feedback from stakeholders</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Final Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Julie Higinbotham</p>	<p>Oct 2011</p>	<p>R2/Audit Commission Recommendation</p> <p><b><i>Strengthening performance management and planning</i></b></p>	

Set targets for benefit take up work and measure outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update benefit take up strategy to include mechanism to create targets and measure outcomes</li> </ul>	Julie Higinbotham	June 2011	R2/Audit Commission Recommendation  <b><i>Strengthening performance management and planning</i></b>	
Strengthen councilor support for the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver fraud and benefit awareness to all councillors</li> </ul>	Ian Brown	October 2011	R3/Audit commission Recommendation  <b><i>Strengthening councilor and key stakeholder support</i></b>	

<p>Improve approach to achieving value for money by reducing the amount of overpayment debt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update overpayment procedure</li> <li>• Monitor the age and profile of outstanding debts</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">North Hub South Hub East Hub West Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set and monitor monthly recovery targets</li> </ul>	<p>Julie Higinbotham</p>	<p>Oct 2011</p>	<p>R4- Audit Commission Recommendation</p> <p><b><i>Improving approach to achieving value for money</i></b></p>	
<p>Improve approach to achieving value for money and understanding service costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake robust benchmarking with the best and established similar organizations</li> <li>• Develop a continual process of measuring costs and performance against set targets</li> </ul>	<p>Sally Kimber</p>	<p>Oct 2011</p>	<p>R4- Audit Commission Recommendation</p> <p><b><i>Improving approach to achieving value for money</i></b></p>	

