

SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

BVPI 78a & b - Average time taken to process new benefit claims / change in circumstances. BVPI 79a – Accuracy of processing benefits claims
<p>Responsible Officer: Julie Higinbotham</p>
<p>Latest performance (see analysis overleaf):</p> <p>BV78a, New claims were processed in 52.5 days in 3rd quarter of 2006/07. This is an improvement from the 2005/06 annual figure of 73 days. Continued improvement shown over the last 7 quarters (from 88 days), but performance is still well below lowest district council quartile (41 days). Recent trends suggest that we will need to achieve an average of under 35 days to move out of the bottom quartile.</p> <p>BV78b, Changes in circumstances currently (3rd quarter of 2006/07) take 39 days to process. This is an improvement from the 2005/06 annual figure of 53 days, but this is still Well below lowest district council quartile (12 days). Recent trends suggest that we will need to achieve an average of around 16 days to move out of the bottom quartile.</p> <p>BVPI 79a, Accuracy of processing benefits claims is currently 94.13%, which is a significant drop from 2005/06, moving from top to bottom quartile. Recent trends suggest that we will need to achieve an accuracy of around 97% to move out of the bottom quartile.</p>
<p>Reason(s) for current performance:</p> <p>Since 2002 the service has been under tremendous pressure mainly due to increased work volumes, lack of resources, loss of experienced staff and a failing benefit administration system. Additionally, since 2005 there has been a covert unresolved staffing issue which has had a major impact on service delivery.</p> <p>In October 2005 a review of the service identified a need to restructure in order to facilitate effective performance management and cope with increased workloads. Furthermore, in March 2005 the Council replaced the old in-house benefit administration system with 'Northgate' (Sx3).</p> <p>Despite agreement to increase staffing levels and introduce a new supervisory role to facilitate performance management, the recruitment process has been problematic. There is a national shortage of experienced benefit administration staff and it has been necessary to recruit largely inexperienced staff and train them in-house. Although all of the new posts were filled by January 2007, recruiting inexperienced staff has severely hampered recovery. It takes a minimum of 12 months to fully train a benefit assessment officer. Recovery has also been hampered due to data migration problems with the new benefit administration system and the requirement for staff to get fully conversant with the new system.</p> <p>Current Position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mail backlog has been cleared from 4000 items to 1300 which is less than the average weekly incoming mail • Robust procedures are in place to manage performance and develop staff to their full potential. • New procedures have been introduced to ensure customers provide information in a

timely fashion – DWP consultants were critical of the fact that the Council allows customers to delay in providing documentation to support their claims

- Officers have been working with DWP consultants in order to identify barriers to improving performance in key areas. As a result of this work an action plan has been developed which focuses on improving national performance indicators. Key actions include the adoption of robust procedures for gathering information and improving the flow of management information.
- The teams performance is monitored monthly and reviewed on a regular basis by the DWP's performance team
- Data migration problems have been resolved and staff are now fully conversant with the new system.

Forecast performance (*What level? By when? National comparison?*):

BVPI 78a – Achieve 37 days by March 2008

BVPI 78b – Achieve 12 days by March 2008

BVPI 79a – Achieve 97% by March 2008

Action Plan: See attached

Action	Impact (<i>how will this help?</i>)	Who?	When?
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A detailed action plan, which is specifically geared towards improving PIs, has been developed with the DWP performance team. Available on request.

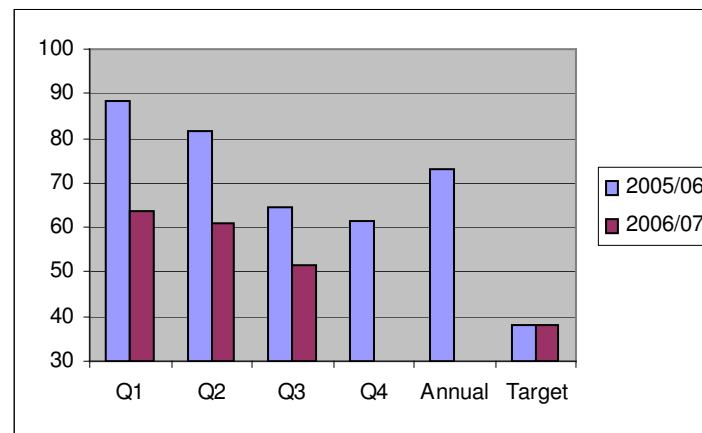
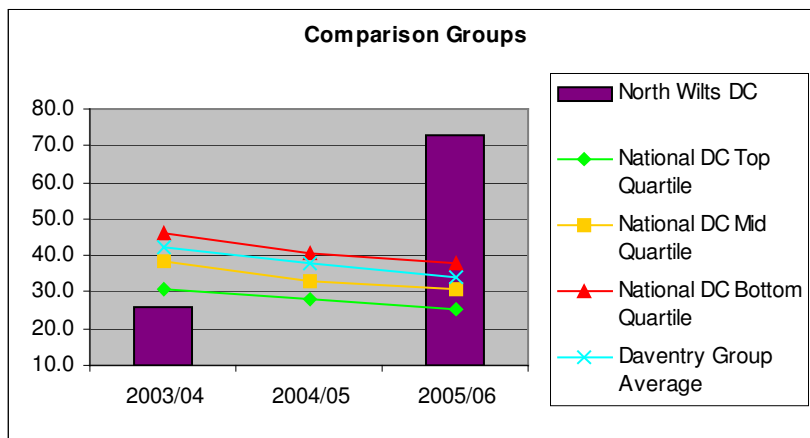
Reviewed by:	Lead Member		Date:
	Strategic Manager		Date:
	Scrutiny		Date:

Next review date:

BV78a - Average time taken to process new benefit claims

Comparison Group	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
National DC Top Quartile	31.0	28.0	25.5
National DC Mid Quartile	38.4	33.0	31.0
National DC Bottom Quartile	46.3	40.6	37.8
Daventry Group Average	42.0	37.7	34.2
North Wilts DC	25.7	-	73.0

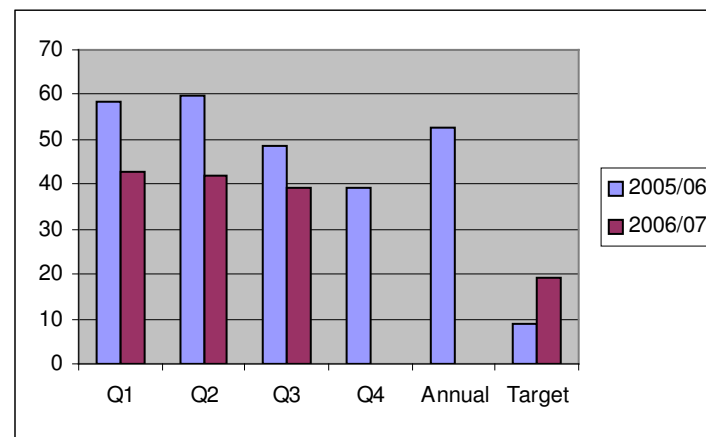
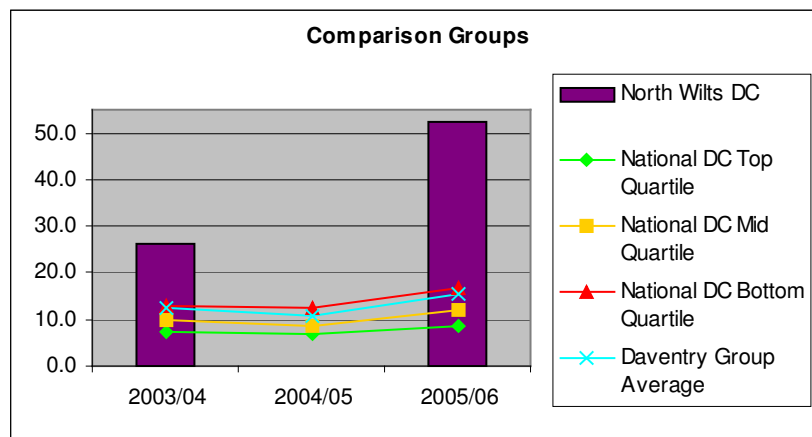
Quarterly performance in 06/07, compared to 05/06						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
2005/06	88.12	81.63	64.72	61.22	73	38
2006/07	63.65	60.97	51.48			38
% change	-28	-25	-20	-100	-100	0



BV78b - Average time taken to process changes in circumstances

Comparison Group	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
National DC Top Quartile	7.2	6.8	8.5
National DC Mid Quartile	9.7	8.8	11.9
National DC Bottom Quartile	13.0	12.4	16.7
Daventry Group Average	12.3	10.9	15.3
North Wilts DC	26.0	-	52.6

Quarterly performance in 06/07, compared to 05/06						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
2005/06	58.34	59.53	48.49	39.37	52.6	9
2006/07	42.65	41.81	39.37			19
% change	-27	-30	-19	-100	-100	111



BV79a - Average time taken to process changes in circumstances

Comparison Group	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
National DC Top Quartile	99.0	99.0	99.0
National DC Mid Quartile	98.0	98.0	98.2
National DC Bottom Quartile	96.8	96.8	96.8
Daventry Group Average	97.5	97.8	97.9
North Wilts DC	98.2	-	99.2

Quarterly performance in 06/07, compared to 05/06						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual	Target
2005/06	99.2	98.4	99.2	100	99.2	98
2006/07	93.6	95.2	93.6			98
% change	-6	-3	-6	-100	-100	0

