

Scottish Borders Council - Risk Assessment – Action Plan – October 2017

Risk Number	Description of risk	Action to be taken	Responsibility		List of tasks to be carried out to remove risks	By when
			Lead officer	Others		
1	There is a significant risk that based on current resource levels, the benefit service will be unable to maintain or improve on previous performance.	Maximise use of existing resource including revised processing and managerial arrangements resulting from the service restructure.	Lead Officer Benefits	Financial Support & Inclusion Team Leader and Supervisors	Responsibility for Discretionary Housing Payments and Scottish Welfare Fund will move from the current management area to the Financial Support and Inclusion Team. This will reduce non HB/CTR work in the team. These areas will become separate streams of work.	15/11/17
		Extend use of contracted services	Lead Officer Benefits	Customer Advice & Support Manager Homelessness & Financial Support Manager	Increase resource from existing contract. Add new provider - requires CGI to add Virtual Private Network access urgently	31/12/17
		Focus overtime working	Lead Officer Benefits	Customer Advice & Support Manager Homelessness & Financial Support Manager	Staff overtime when required will be focussed on specific tasks to ensure it provides value for money	31/12/17
2	The performance of the benefit service is not being formally reported to the relevant Council monitoring committee and, in addition, performance in respect of the recovery of all benefit overpayments is not being formally reported to senior management out with the Customer and Advice Service, or to elected members as part of the Council's performance management framework.	Present monthly summary, quarterly and bi-annual detail reports	Lead Officer Benefits	Customer Advice & Support Manager Homelessness & Financial Support Manager	Present a monthly summary report to the Service Director commencing November 2017. Present a quarterly report to the Service Director and Chief Financial Officer commencing January 2018.	31/01/18

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					Present a bi-annual report to relevant performance committee January 2018	
3	The average time taken to process new claims and change events has declined significantly in quarter one of 2017/18.	Actions from risk 1 and 2	Lead Officer Benefits		Improve processing procedures and focus overtime working	15/11/17
		Introduce Risk Based Verification (RBV)	Lead Officer Benefits	Customer Advice & Support Development Team Customer Advice & Support Systems and Support Officer	Implement go live for RBV software and procedures	31/01/18
		Increase take up of online application	Lead Officer Benefits	Customer Advice & Support Development Team	Promote take via radio etc adverts, Staff to encourage take-up through supporting customers on-line Introduce offline app for Registered Social Landlords and Homelessness Team	31/12/17
4	Accuracy performance declined significantly in 2016/17.	Consolidate staff and end permanent lone working	Lead Officer Benefits	Customer Advice & Support Manager Homelessness and Financial Support Manager	Find sites to accommodate staffing levels (maximum 2 sites)	15/11//17
		Increase post notification checks	Lead Officer Benefits	Benefit Supervisors	Increase the numbers of post notification checks	15/11/17

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		Create a greater emphasis in one to ones on accuracy levels	Lead Officer Benefits	Benefit Supervisors	New line management arrangements under new structure	15/11/17
		Review desk aids, instruction notes and training notes	Lead Officer Benefits	Benefit Supervisors	Provide focussed instructions on 13 week protection, earned income, reg 9 and Persons From Abroad	31/12/17
		Six monthly review of Assessor PN check errors	Lead Officer Benefits	Benefit Supervisors	Review error trends and areas for individual or team development	15/11/17
5	The benefit service is not formally recording the outcomes from all of its management checking activities, and is therefore unable to report on the accuracy of the service as a whole.	Extend the existing spreadsheet for analysis of errors found outwith formal pre or post notification checks	Lead Officer Benefits	Benefit Supervisors	Record all examples of errors or bad practice from enquiries, appeals, Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE) report checks and over £500 payments checks. Include these checks within existing analysis	15/11/17
6	Although interventions outcomes are recorded, the level of detail is not sufficient to allow the council to determine the effectiveness of its approach in financial terms, or the effectiveness of each monthly intervention campaign, which could help ensure that future activity is informed, risk-based, and cost effective.	Increase the analytical detail against claim adjustments codes to drill down to change reasons and amounts derived	Lead Officer Benefits	Customer Advice & Support Development Team Customer Advice & Support Systems and Support Officer	Confirm with Customer Advice & Support Systems Team whether additional codes can be included for reporting purposes in the benefits system to allow identification of review types. Contact other local authorities Agree review code types, Create suitable reports. Agree the reporting regime	31/12/17