

Basildon District Council

Benefit Service: Summary of current performance

Overall, we found that Basildon District Council's HB and CTB service is providing a **Fair** performance. Basildon District Council's current performance demonstrates a number of strengths. These include:

- a service plan including targets
- both the Charter Mark and Investors in People accreditation
- procedural manuals covering all areas of benefits and counter-fraud work
- a published customer service Charter detailing the standards of service customers can expect
- a dedicated Training Officer in Benefits
- formalised procedures for handling complaints
- risk groups used to set benefit periods
- a landlords information pack
- guidance notes produced for Housing Area Office staff to help them deal with HB and CTB enquiries
- liaison meetings with the council's Housing Department held bi-monthly
- an annual assessment of the IT system
- documented overpayments and write off procedures.

However there are some areas where Basildon District Council needs to develop further to fully meet the BFI and the Department's Performance Standards framework. These include:

- improving the speed of processing claims in all areas
- assessing the needs of its in work claimants and planning to meet those needs
- monitoring waiting times for personal callers and telephone service delivery
- introducing Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound targets in staff job descriptions
- undertaking management checking in line with Audit Commission guidelines
- starting investigations within 14 days of receipt of the fraud referral
- reporting overpayment recovery rates and level and age of debt to Members and senior managers.

How BFI's current performance assessment informs the Audit Commission's overall assessment is described [here](#).