

Braintree District Council

Benefit Service: Summary of current performance

Overall, we found that Braintree District Council's HB and CTB service performance is **Fair towards Good**. Braintree District Council's current performance shows a number of strengths. These include:

- introducing the Department for Work and Pensions' (the Department) Verification Framework
- having a documented action plan that aspires to meet the Department's Performance Standards
- prompt identification and processing of all changes of circumstances
- a strong emphasis on processing new claims speedily
- a management checking framework that covers all types of benefit claims
- an organisational structure within which individual roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood
- applying all types of sanctions on fraudsters
- a specific resource allocated to recover HB overpayments.

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

- ensuring the council's corporate vision has an overarching statement of intent to provide an effective and secure Benefits service
- developing a vision statement for the Benefits service that is endorsed by elected Members
- developing policies and strategies that cover all areas of HB and CTB administration and having them endorsed by elected Members and reviewed as part of the annual planning cycle
- extending the scope of the Finance Division's Business Plan to reflect the aims and objectives of the Benefits service over the full range of HB and CTB administration
- developing a business plan that includes details of resources, planned activities and agreed operational targets for counter-fraud
- developing a business continuity plan and IT recovery plans.

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