

Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2007

London Borough of Croydon

Introduction

1.1 This assessment has been undertaken as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) programme and does not represent a full inspection of London Borough of Croydon's Benefits service. This report has been produced pursuant to powers contained in sections 10 and 11 of the Local Government Act 1999.

1.2 We gathered information for this assessment from a range of sources including:

- the self-assessment and evidence provided by the council
- Best Value Performance Indicators and performance measures
- discussions with senior officers in the council
- BFI's CPA 2006 report.

Overall Performance

1.3 In 2006 we reported that the council met 9 of the 12 performance measures and 58 of the 65 enablers. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it achieved a rating of excellent against 8 of the 13 performance measures scored by the Department and met 60 enablers. This resulted in the scores reflected below:

Performance Standards score	Excellent
Audit Commission score	4

1.4 The council maintained its performance against the performance measures across all themes and maintained its overall score of Excellent.

1.5 London Borough of Croydon provided a full self-assessment against 2006 HB/CTB Performance Standards. The evidence provided by the council supported its self-assessment.

1.6 Figure 1.1 compares the scores for the individual Performance Standards theme scores for CPA 2006 and CPA 2007 to highlight any changes in reported performance.

Figure 1.1: Performance Standards theme scores			
Theme	2006	2007	Change
Claims administration	3	3	=
Security	4	4	=
User focus	4	4	=
Resource management	4	4	=
Overall score	4	4	=

Source: BFI analysis

Findings

Claims administration

1.7 London Borough of Croydon's performance measure data for Claims administration is shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Claims administration performance measures 2006/07						
Performance measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Full year	Score
PM 1: Average time for processing new claims (days)	26	24	28	33	28	4
PM 2: % of new claims outstanding over 50 days	18	15	56	12	12	3
PM 3: % of new claims decided within 14 days of receiving all information	100	94	77	78	85	3
PM 4: % of rent allowance claims paid on time or within 7 days of a decision being made	91	86	83	87	87	3
PM 5: Average time for processing changes of circumstances (days)	8	7	10	14	10	3
PM 6: % of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due is correct	100	99	99	100	100	4

Source: London Borough of Croydon
(Full year figures are based on an annual calculation and may not reflect the average of 4 quarters performance)

1.8 In 2006 we reported that the council met 3 of the 6 performance measures. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it achieved a rating of excellent against 2 of the 6 performance measures scored by the Department. We also reported that the council met 15 of the 16 enablers. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it met 14.

1.9 The council told us that it implemented a new benefits processing system in 2006/07. While this was being implemented, 3 weeks of processing time were lost, which led to a backlog of claims processing work. This affected processing times during the third and fourth quarters of 2006/07.

Security

1.10 In April 2006, Performance Standards were revised to include a scoring mechanism for performance measure PM16. This takes account of the number of successful sanctions applied in relation to a council's live caseload.

1.11 London Borough of Croydon's performance measure data for Security is shown in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3: Security Performance measure scores 2006/07			
Performance measure	Annual target	Performance	Score
PM 10: Interventions where review action completed	15,000	104%	4
PM 11: Data matches resolved within 2 months	Not applicable	100	4
PM 12: Customers visited	5,201	245%	4
PM 16: Number of successful sanctions per 1,000 caseload	Not applicable	4	3

Source: London Borough of Croydon

1.12 In 2006 we reported that the council met all of the 3 performance measures. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it achieved a rating of excellent against 3 of the 4 performance measures scored by the Department. We also reported that the council met 17 of the 21 enablers. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it met 19 enablers.

1.13 The council told us that it had visited nearly 13,000 customers during 2006/07, an increase of 36% compared to 2005/06. It also imposed 127 successful sanctions, an increase of 130% compared to 2005/06.

User focus

1.14 London Borough of Croydon's performance measure data for User focus is shown in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: User focus performance measures 2006/07						
Performance measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Full year	Score
PM 17: % of applications for reconsideration /revision actioned and notified within 4 weeks	81	72	84	66	76	4
PM 18: % of appeals submitted to the Appeals Service in 4 weeks	100	100	89	100	92	4
PM 19: % of appeals submitted to the Appeals Service in 3 months	100	100	11	100	100	4

Source: London Borough of Croydon

(Full year figures are based on an annual calculation and may not reflect the average of 4 quarters performance)

1.15 In 2006 we reported that the council met all of the 3 performance measures. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it achieved a rating of excellent against all 3 performance measures scored by the Department. We also reported that the council met all 12 enablers. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it continued to meet all 12 enablers.

1.16 The council attributed its successful performance to its team of experienced officers dealing with all complaints and appeals, close monitoring of incoming workloads and reallocation of resources to meet targets, along with using the information gathered from complaints to drive improvements in customer service.

Resource management

1.17 In 2006 we reported that the council met 14 of the 16 enablers. The council's most recent self-assessment showed that it met 15.