Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support Targets

Housing Benefit Processing Times (New Claims in days) – Target is 21 days

2016/17	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	24.2	16.6	17.2	17.9	18.9	17.8	19.0	17.8	20.4	19.3	15.8	17.3

2017/18	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	21.4	24.7	18.4	17.9	20.2	17.8						

Council Tax Support Processing Times (New Claims in days) – Target is 22 days

2016/17	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	19.4	MAR
	23.2	21.1	19.3	19.6	20.1	20.1	20.5	19.3	21.8	20.1	16.9	18.1

2017/18	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	22.1	25.	23.0	17.1	19.9	18.2						

During 2016/17 new claims processing times were within the agreed target for both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. Nationally new claims for Housing Benefit were processed in an average of 22 days. Rossendale achieved an average of 19 days so were well placed amongst the Lancashire Authorities, and well below the agreed target of 21 days.

Performance for the first quarter of 2017/2018 had some challenges which resulted in the Housing Benefit performance coming in at 21.2 days for quarter 1 against the target of 21 days, and Council Tax Support coming in at 23.5 days against a target of 22 days. All Local Authorities experience longer processing times in the first quarter of each financial year so although performance was above the agreed target it is still below the national average for the quarter which was 23 days for Housing Benefit new claims.

From July performance has been back on track and a good result was achieved in quarter 2. Housing Benefit new claims were processed in an average of 18.6 days and Council Tax Support in 18.3 days.

Housing Benefit Processing Times (Changes in Circumstances in days) – Target is 7 days

2016/17	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	4.4	4.8	5.9	4.7	4.6	5.2	5.7	5.0	5.3	3.5	3.5	1.6

2017/18	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	3.4	7.0	8.4	4.9	4.7	5.0						

Council Tax Support Processing Times (Changes in Circumstances in days) – Target is 7 days

2016/17	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	2.9	4.3	5.5	4.0	4.2	5.2	5.6	4.5	4.8	3.9	3.8	3.8

2017/18	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	3.5	7.3	8.0	4.7	5.0	7.0						

During 2016/17 change in circumstance processing times were well within target for both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. Nationally changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit were processed in an average of 7 days. Rossendale achieved an average of 4 days, with performance in quarter 4 being an impressive 2 days. Rossendale benchmarked extremely well against the other Lancashire Authorities coming out joint second overall.

Performance for the first two quarters of 2017/2018 has continued to be positive. Housing Benefit changes have been processed in an average of 5.88 days and 4.85 days respectively, and Council Tax Support in 6.1 days and 5.5 days against a reduced target of 6.5 days.

Accuracy of Processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Claims (Quarterly) - Target is 93%

Accuracy of HB/CTS Processing				
2016/17	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	93.3%	92.6%	94%	94.3%

2017/18	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	94.6%	94.6%		

50 cases are randomly selected each month and checked for financial and administrative errors. Performance figures are agreed based on the financial errors identified. Performance has been consistent during 2016/2017 and the first two quarters of 2017/2018 coming in well above the 93% agreed target.

Since April 2017 the Service Assurance Team has conducted a further monthly checking exercise. Each month 10 cases are selected from a specific area of processing for example backdating. On average 9 out of 10 cases checked each month were financially correct.

Housing Benefit Overpayments Recovered – Targets 60% 2016/17 & 50% 2017/18 for the period raised and 6.25% (i.e. 25% for the year) for overall debt.

%HB Overpayments recovered (Period Raised)				
2016/17	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	39.61%	53.21%	118.76%	46.69%

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2017/18	69.14%	57.15%		

%HB overpayments Recovered (Overall Debt)				
2016/17	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	8.91%	10.19%	12.27%	8.52%

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2017/18	8.83%	9.74%		

There are two performance indicators in this area. One is the collection rate as a percentage of new overpayments raised in the quarter; the second is the collection rate as a percentage against all outstanding overpayments.

In 2016/2017 performance was affected due to the significant level of activity in fraud and compliance, which generated a sharp increase in the amounts of overpayments created due to fraud being detected. For 2017/2018 the target for collection rate of new overpayments generated and recovered in the quarter reduced from 60% to 50%. Performances for quarters 1 and 2 have been above the new target.

For the second indicator the target remains at 6.25% per quarter/25% annually. Performance remains above target for 2017/2018 despite the challenges of Real Time Information which is identifying overpayments which would historically only have been identified when the claim became subject to a review.

Where claimants are still in receipt of benefits, overpayments are collected via deduction from ongoing entitlement. Where there is no entitlement collection activity is undertake as a normal civil debt.

Revenues Targets

Collection rate of current year's Council Tax – Target is 96.9%

2016/17	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	10.6	19.7	30.1	38	47.2	56.4	65.6	74.7	83.9	93.0	94.8	96.2

2017/18	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	10.4	19.5	28.8	37.9	47.1	56.2						

The performance indicators for collection of Council Tax and NNDR are targets and the reported figures represent the percentage of tax which is collected within the financial year that it fell due. Performance monitoring through the year is based on a comparison of progress against the previous year's collection rate figure and against monthly milestones towards the annual target.

For Council Tax the outturn collection rate for 2016/17 was 96.2%, down on the outturn of 96.8% for 2015/16. In cash terms £32,399,937.54 was collected; £1,211,532.99 more than 2015/16 equating to an increase of 3.88%. As at the end of September 2016, collection stood at 56.4%. Collection rates have been within the range 56-57% at this point in each of the last three years; it is anticipated this this year's outturn will be in the range 97-98%.

The 2016/17 average for Lancashire was 95.9%. If the highest and lowest Lancashire outturns are excluded (Ribble Valley and Blackpool) then the remaining average is 96.2%. It is interesting to note that Lancaster and Preston, who run a shared service, had a 2% difference in outturn, suggesting that area demographic has a significant effect even where collection practice is the same. Collection fell by an average 0.1% in Lancashire last year.

Collection rate of current year's National Non-Domestic Rates - Target is 97.9%

2016/17	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	11.3	19.2	28.3	35.6	43.6	58.9	67.0	74.4	82.1	90.2	94.1	97.2

2017/18		MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
	10.3	19.1	27.5	36.9	50.0	57.6						

NNDR collection rate was 97.2% in 2016/17, down from of 97.4% for 2015/16. In cash terms £14,307,947.57 was collected, £434,442.64 and 3.13% more than on 2015/16. As at the end of September 2016, collection stood at 57.6%. In-year collection rates for NNDR tend to be more volatile than for Council Tax, due to the narrowness of the tax base. For example of 2704 non-domestic assessments, the 10 largest make up 22% of the total rateable value. The collection rate can therefore be affected by one or two missed payments. At the time of writing, we still await the valuation of a number of large units from the retail park at New Hall Hey. Once these are assessed a clearer picture will emerge. The expectation is that these new assessments, occupied by major national companies, will be positive for collection.

Rossendale also remains in dispute over a significant number of cases relating to an individual company. The Council's position is that unlawful tax evasion strategies have been employed by the company in question. These matters are due to progress to Court with legal representation separate to the Capita. At the end of last year, these matters were estimated to comprise 1.77% of the total NNDR debit. In the context of 2.8% of the debit being unpaid in-year, the progress and outcome of that case will again determine if collection target is reached.

Average collection for Lancashire in 2016/17 was 97.3%. On average, collection for all Lancashire authorities fell 0.2% last year. It is not yet clear what impact the NNDR revaluation will have on overall collection. In Rossendale more properties saw a reduction in rateable value than an increase.

Monitoring is also undertaken in respect of the following measures relating to property inspections:

- All empty domestic and non-domestic property is inspected at least twice per annum in order to confirm any new occupancy
- All new developments sites inspected at least twice per annum in order to capture newly completed property/ property brought back into use
- 'Ad-hoc inspections completed within 14 days i.e. visits to verify entitlement to discounts/exemptions, or internal inspection requests in order to verify occupancy details

Contact Centre Targets

Customer Waiting Times on the One Stop Shop – Target is 12.5 minutes waiting time (NB the council corporate target is 15 minutes)

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2016/17	footfall	2603	2616	2876	2752	2697	2789	2767	2793	2020	2174	2020	2279
	waiting	12	11	10	12	12	12	9	7	8	6	7	6
2017/18	footfall	1833	2057	1935	1875	1743	1724						
	waiting	8	6	7	7	7	7						

Customer waiting times are consistently within target and are also consistently lower in 2016/17 than in 2015/16. Customer numbers have fallen sharply, with an average of 861 less customers per month during 2016/17 than for the corresponding period last year. In particular, a fall in the numbers of taxi licensing customers, driven by the adoption of new licensing policy, has contributed to this fall.