

Service being assessed	Benefit Fraud
Who will be involved in completing this assessment?	Stuart Brabben, Service Manager Enforcement (Revenues)
Date of Review	9 June 2011
Date of Next Review	9 June 2012
What is the purpose of the service?	<p>To identify fraud within the council tax and housing benefit system and to recover overpayments, to prosecute and apply sanctions against fraudulent claimants (where applicable).</p> <p>To help ensure that the right benefits are paid to the right people at the right time.</p>
Is this assessment being undertaken because of changes to the service? If so what are they?	Assessment being undertaken as part of Council's annual review of equalities information, not because of change to service/policy.
<p>The purpose of this assessment is to understand how services can help the Council to meet its duties under Equalities legislation. The duties can be summarised as</p> <p>1. Eliminate discrimination</p>	<p>The team operate under the Fraud Policy and national legislation. Initial contact is made with the claimant suspected of fraud with invitations to attend for an informal interview. Alternative messages are put into the letters if it is identified that the persons first language may not be English. Two chances are offered before more formal action is taken.</p>

<p>2. Advance equality of opportunity 3. Foster good relations between different parts of the community</p> <p>How does this service help the Council to do this, in particular in relation to the categories specifically mentioned in legislation - Race, Gender/Sex, Disability, Age, Religion/Belief, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy & Maternity and in respect of Duty 1 only – Marriage and Civil Partnerships?</p>	<p>Policy helps officers to decide whether case will be taken to prosecution or not. Each person is treated as an individual and any special requirements to ensure that we can communicate effectively with the person are provided – translations, alternative formats, wheelchair access interview rooms and invitations for another person to attend them to interview are just some of the services on offer.</p>
<p>How will you know that service is working as it should?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for sanctions being met • Referrals to fraud team decreasing • Correct referrals by processing team to fraud team
<p>What data have you used to help you make this assessment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures • Legislation • Performance information – targets and indicators • Reports gained from interrogating the Fraud system – IBS. For example showing the number of referrals
<p>What is, or what do you expect to be the impact of the way you work on different parts of the community, including those covered by equality legislation?</p>	<p>Who benefits? The Borough / community as fraud takes money away from spending on other services.</p>

	<p>Who should be expected to benefit but don't – Why not? Not applicable.</p>
<p>On the basis of what you have found out, which of these options will you now follow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major changes • Adjust the policy • Continue the policy • Stop and remove the policy <p>This is a review – not a new policy or service. As and when it is proposed to change the service or policies, new assessments will be completed.</p>
<p>What now needs to be done and by who?</p>	<p>There is a possibility of a Single Investigation Team being formed with the DWP who will use a data-based approach to investigation. The existing team members would be transferred if the team is formed. As and when the feasibility of this proposal is investigated, equalities will be considered.</p>
<p>Signed off by</p>	<p>Stuart Brabben, Service Manager Enforcement (Revenues)</p>