

Public Document Pack



Please note that the following documents were published separately from the main agenda for this meeting of the Shared Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee to be held on Tuesday, 27th November 2018 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 1, City Hall.

7. Housing Benefit Overpayments Update (Pages 3 - 16)

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Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery Action Plan – 2018/19

Action No.	Action Needed	Responsible Person	Action	Completion Date	Review Date	Comments
1	Expression of interest to be issued to staff	Benefits Team Leader (BTL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email to all Housing Benefit Officers with expression of interest details – start date 18 June 2018, after HDD report 	08.05.18	17.05.18	Completed
2	Management Information to be set up and agreed	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BTL to speak with Recovery and Systems Team Leaders to ascertain what MI is available on Northgate system 	18.06.18	Weekly for team Monthly for reporting	Completed – MI spreadsheet set up and completed monthly
3	Review of HDD Findings	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HDD report to be reviewed by BTL and R&B Manager to set action plan 	26.05.18	18.06.18 and then weekly	HBOP Plan agreed and implemented
4	Review of Housing Benefit Debt Service project	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Login to online forum to read through the guidance and 	08.06.18	Monthly	Completed

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences of other teams • Check data download table 			
5	Agree working arrangements for HBOP officers	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To liaise with Recovery Team Leader to discuss current working arrangements and processes for sundry debts 	08.06.18	Monthly	Monthly meeting in diaries and taking place
6	Meet with successful HBOP officer	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a remit of the role and gain input into creation of action plan 	08.06.18	Monthly	Remit of role to be reviewed monthly at 1-1
7	Set up MI spreadsheet	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MI spreadsheet to provide baseline stats as at 31 May 2018 • To be completed each month to give comparison figures • MI details to be gathered are further down in the action plan for each stage of debt 	01.06.18	Monthly	Completed

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8	Recovery method flowchart	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce a recovery method flowchart which clearly shows preferred recovery method routes (taking into account recommendations from HDD regarding capital, review of methods etc) 	08.06.18	Monthly	To be reviewed monthly to ensure fit for purpose
Creation of overpayments						
9	Understanding the importance of recovery (HDD recommendation 10)	BTL's and Recovery Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication of the work and action plan is needed from the outset at benefit and recovery team meetings. Staff need to understand debt recovery is part of their role and understand the level of debt and importance of recovering this 	30.06.18	Monthly	<p>Complete: BTL and HBOP to attend Team Meetings to speak with staff about the project and the importance of recovery</p> <p>12.07.18 – Meeting with NK staff took place</p> <p>November 2018 – Current position to</p>

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						be highlighted at R&B Management meeting
10	Benefits Officer training	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence in discussing overpayments with customers Setting appropriate arrangements 	30.06.18	Monthly	Effectiveness of training to be reviewed at team meetings (discussion with staff) along with reviewing relevant stats
11	Review diary dating process (HDD recommendation 2)	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure consistent approach to diary dating including how and when this should be done. Removal of use of outlook? Use of Northgate diary suite? Who should be reviewing the diary date? The Benefits Officer or the HBOP Officer? 	30.06.18	Monthly	<p>Complete: Diary date report to be reviewed by HBOP team to ensure it is being used to full capacity</p> <p>Spreadsheet set up and saved in LINK drive to ensure all staff have access and can review</p>

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12	Consider claimant capital as recovery method (HDD recommendation 4)	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital to be considered before recovery from ongoing benefit or payment arrangement 	08.06.18		To be included as part of the HBOP recovery flowchart
Overpayments recovered from ongoing Housing Benefit						
13	Monthly management Information (MI) required	BTL / HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed MI required: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. at this stage Value at this stage 	31.05.18	Monthly	Baseline stats for 31.05.18 Each month to be available within 3 working days of 1 st of each month
14	Review level of clawback (HDD recommendation 3)	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process in place to review when a claimant returns to HB where there has been a recovery reduction previously 	08.06.18	Monthly	Clawback for COLC reviewed for May. Issues with BOXI report for NK. Logged with Support Team Reports all working and being reviewed monthly

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Overpayments at sundry debt and on arrangement						
15	Monthly management Information required	BTL / HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed MI required: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No. at each stage ○ Value at each stage ○ No. passed on to next stage 	31.05.18	Monthly	<p>Baseline stats for 31.05.18</p> <p>Each month to be available within 3 working days of 1st of each month</p>
16	Consider current timeline for reminders (HDD recommendation 1)	HBOP Team	<p>Looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing reminders at days 21 and 35 • Starting action at day 31 	15.07.18	N/A	BTL to discuss with Recovery Team Leader
17	Passing on of non-arrangement debts to HBOP Recovery team	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process needed as to what point the debt is passed to the HBOP recovery team for next action (such as referral to DWP debt service) 	08.06.18	Monthly	<p>Complete: Process has been agreed and is now in place</p> <p>To be reviewed monthly to ensure these debts are being passed on to next stage</p>

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18	Telephone rota (HDD recommendation 5)	Recovery Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider putting a telephone rota in place, for example half a day at a time so debt officer time dealing with debt recovery is not as highly impacted 	31.07.18	N/A	
Overpayments over 4 months old and where there is no arrangement						
19	Monthly management Information required	BTL / HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed MI required: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. at this stage Value at this stage 	31.05.18	Monthly	<p>Baseline stats for 31.05.18</p> <p>Each month to be available within 3 working days of 1st of each month</p>
20	Existing overpayments over 4 months old with no action: Removal of these overpayments from sundry team	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be removed from the recovery team and brought into the HBOP team 	08.06.18	N/A	Actioned – HBOP team working on these cases

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Action No.	Action Needed	Responsible Person	Action	Completion Date	Review Date	Comments
21	Existing overpayments over 4 months old with no action: Review of status of recovery	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of recovery stage to be reviewed • Appropriate action to be undertaken – arrangement / debt service or write off <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detailed MI required: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No. at this stage ▪ Value at this stage 	31.07.18	Monthly for new cases	<p>Prioritised cases over £2000 where no recovery in place</p> <p>Completed: 20.07.18 – prioritised cases where a debt is o/s from 12/13</p>
22	Use of DWP Debt Service Project	BTL / HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These debts to be reviewed and passed to DWP Debt service project for potential recovery from earnings • Detailed MI required: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No. at this stage ○ Value at this stage 	30.06.18	Monthly	<p>Cases for July included all cases for NK and COLC where an overpayment was created 12/13 and there had been no payments received towards the o/s debt in the last 4 months. 247 cases for COLC and 111 for NK</p>

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23	Looking at highest and oldest debt MI (HDD recommendation 7)	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted review of these cases 	31.07.18	Monthly	458 cases identified and sent to DWP
Write Offs						
24	Monthly management Information required	BTL / HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed MI required: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. at this stage Value at this stage 	31.05.18	Monthly	Baseline stats for 31.05.18 Each month to be available within 3 working days of 1 st of each month
25	Review of write off process for COL and NKDC	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure process is correct and agreed by all parties 	31.05.18		Complete: Process reviewed and all agreed
26	Review NKDC write off of OP's created £10 and under (where only recovery is invoice) – uneconomical to recover	BTL / R&B Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet with NKDC Finance to agree process 	31.07.18		Complete: NKDC have agreed for automatic write off of these debts
Management Information (MI)						

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27	MI to be collated monthly	BTL / HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MI as above to be collated on a spreadsheet for easy monthly comparison 	31.05.18	Monthly	<p>Baseline stats for 31.05.18</p> <p>Each month to be available within 3 working days of 1st of each month</p>
28	Management Information (MI) to be readily available (HDD recommendation 6)	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that team leaders and senior recovery staff are able to analyse and understand the MI to manage debt recovery performance Feedback to HBOP officers – providing update on performance, looking at ‘issue’ areas Feedback to team members – providing update on actions taken and outcomes 	01.07.18	Monthly	<p>Baseline and June stats to be available 1 July 2018</p> <p>Monthly stats to be available within 3 working days of 1st of each month</p>

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HBOP Team and their role						
29	Collaboration between Benefits / Recovery Officers and the HBOP Team (HDD recommendation 11)	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly meetings where achievements can be shared and areas for improvements can be discussed • This can be led by the HBOP Project Manager 	01.07.18	Bi-Monthly	Meetings taking place with BTL, HBOP and Recovery Team
30	Direct Recovery from ongoing Benefit	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincoln and NK reports to be worked on monthly 	Ongoing	Monthly	Reports all working and being reviewed monthly
31	Newly created Invoices	Recovery Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All invoices up to 4 months old to be dealt with by Recovery Team 	Ongoing	Monthly	To be reviewed each month to ensure nothing of 4 months old is with recovery team
32	HB Debt Service	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTL and HBOP team to work together to identify cases for the Debt Service 	Ongoing	Monthly	BTL to send the data via Data Hub on the 14 th of each month. Responses to be received back

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BTL to work with Support Team to provide the data each month 			on 21 st of each month
33	Write Off's - Current	BTL/Recovery Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BTL'S to deal with Write Off's Recovery Team Leader to deal with Write Off's for those cases at invoice and that are under 4 months old 	Ongoing	Monthly	Complete: Different process at each site – differences identified and all involved have agreed to the process
34	Write Off's – HBOP Project	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincoln – Spreadsheet completed by HBOP Team, Write Off form completed, signed by HoS, overpayment written off Northgate by Lincoln Benefit team leader, HBOP Team notified and spreadsheet updated NK – Spreadsheet completed by HBOP 	Ongoing	Ongoing	Complete: Spreadsheet to be sent to MCW for authorisation

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			Team, Write Off form completed, signed by HoS, data sent to NK Team Leader to seek approval from Tina @ NK, overpayment written off Northgate by NK Benefit team leader, HBOP Team notified and spreadsheet updated			
35	Review of old debtors from Civica system	HBOP Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review cases from old Debtor system 	Ongoing	01.09.18	1378 invoices to be reviewed. 674 cases completed.
36	To set up designated telephone number for the public to call	BTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak to IT to set up number Review letters and update contact information 	01.07.18		Complete: Designated phone number, 3371, set up

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