



Committee and date

Audit Committee

25 November 2010

10.00 am

Item No

8

Public

BENEFIT FRAUD TEAM - PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

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Summary

The Council's benefit fraud team investigates overpayments in respect of Housing and Council Tax Benefits (HB/CTB) alongside overpayments of other Welfare Benefits. This report provides Members with performance monitoring information on the activities of the team for the year to 30 September 2010.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

REPORT

Background

1. The Council has over 25,000 Housing and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) claimants, paying out in excess of £80 million per year.
2. The legislation relating to the payment of HB/CTB is complex, so it is important that the service ensure that individuals report their changes in circumstances promptly. Failure to report either with or without intent can lead to large overpayments of benefit.
3. The team receive referrals from both members of the public and staff.
4. During the year 2009/10 the benefit fraud team were migrating investigation data onto a merged database for Shropshire.

Performance

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Overpayments identified by the Fraud Team

	2009/10	2010/11 (6 months up to 30 Sept)
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£240,980	£220,330
Council Tax Benefit Overpayments	£73,230	£57,960
Totals	£314,210	£278,290

Actions taken by the Fraud Team

	2009/10	2010/11 (6 months up to 30 Sept)
Cautions	34	43
Admin Penalties	14	22
Prosecutions	15	10

5. The total overpaid welfare benefits calculated within this period were £303,460.

Financial Implications

- a. The overpayments identified by the Fraud Team totalled £314,210 in 2009/10. In the first 6 months of this financial year we have identified £278,290.
- b. Any monies identified as overpayments we receive 40% in subsidy payments through Central Government. In addition we keep the overpayment recovered.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

N/A

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

N/A

Risk Management Appraisal

Effective monitoring of benefit payments will enable early action to be taken to minimise the risk of financial loss to the Council.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

N/A

Cabinet Member

Keith Barrow, Leader of the Council (Brian Williams, Chairman of Audit Committee)

Local Member

N/A

Appendices

N/A.