

Record of Decision

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Risk Based Verification Policy 2018/19

Decision Taker

The Elected Mayor on 06 November 2017

Decision

That the amended Risk Based Verification Policy for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.

Reason for the Decision

The Risk Based Verification Policy must be reviewed annually but not changed in-year as this would complicate the audit process.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Friday, 17 November 2017 unless the call-in process is triggered (as set out in Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

At present the Council receives 8,000 new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. Risk Based Verification (RBV) reduces the necessity for many customers to contact the Council through more expensive methods such as face to face, and decreases the need to produce original documents to support their claim resulting in a reduction in the number of customer contacts, lower volumes of scanning and indexing and less information requests.

The main reasons for continuing to undertake Risk Based Verification are as follows:

- An efficient administration that results in a reduction in officer processing time. This allows resources to be deployed to undertake other priority work and results in a reduction of administration costs.
- Significantly reduces the claim verification process for many customers, which also improves processing times.
- Reduces the volume of customer contact received by the Call Centre to chase the progress of applications due to claims being processed promptly.
- Ensures that Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support is paid promptly to ensure that customers remain up to date with their rent.
- Assists to identify potentially fraudulent cases and taking the appropriate action.

The Elected Mayor considered the recommendation of the Policy Development and Decision Group made on 6 November 2017 and his decision is set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

Alternative options were set out in the submitted report but not discussed at the meeting.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

9 November 2017

Signed: _____
The Elected Mayor of Torbay

Date: 9 November 2017