

Service Standards for Revenues & Benefits

Customer Care Standards

We will:

- Deal with your enquiry fairly and sensitively
- Deal with your enquiry promptly and accurately
- Communicate with you clearly and make sure our documents are easily understood
- Ask you regularly if our services are meeting your needs and strive for continuous improvement
- Make sure you can access the services we deliver

Core Service Standards

We will:

- Provide a complete revenues and benefits service to West Lothian.
- Work in partnership with customers to achieve a service that satisfies their objectives and fulfils value for money.
- Measure and monitor our performance against other revenues and benefits services.
- Monitor and review our performance against our standards openly and publish the outcome.

The above are our service standards in respect of the whole unit. These are supported by the measures within each team. Some of the teams have internal customers and some of the teams have external customers i.e. the public. The following is a summary of the performance of the external facing services that are delivered by Revenues.

Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates Team Service Standards	2007/08	Notes
To keep the waiting time for Revenue Team enquiries at St David House and/or Lindsay House to no more than 15 minutes.	Under review at present	
To try and receive payment of all the collectable Business Rates, Council Tax, Service Accounts and Residual Community Charge	94.03% Council Tax 98.2% NDR 95% Service Accounts	
To deal with 90% of correspondence within 10 working days of receipt.	76% Council Tax 53% NDR	A number of factors have affected this standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new team structure agreed in 2007/08. • The recruitment of 7 staff during 2007/08 and the training and development of those staff to a competent level where they could process correspondence. Improvements throughout 2007/08 can be seen and by February 2008 99% of Council Tax and 97% of NDR was being processed against the standard.
To deal with 90% of correspondence accurately at the first time of processing.	Council Tax 92% NDR 77%	A training programme will be delivered from July to October 2008 to address the NDR accuracy rates.
Customer Service Team Service Standards	2007/08	Notes
Ensure that everyone calling at our public enquiry counter is attended to within 15 minutes and that customers with a pre-booked appointment are seen at the time of their appointment.	No longer applies	Customer service team has moved to Lomond House
Answer incoming telephone calls as quickly as	No longer applies	Customer service team has moved to Lomond House

possible and always within five minutes from the queue based system.		
Provide a home visiting service to those who need it and provide regular Revenues surgeries at access points throughout West Lothian.	No longer applies	Customer service team has moved to Lomond House
Attempt to resolve enquiries on the first occasion the customer contacts us. Where this is not possible we will: Outline the additional steps we need to take to resolve their enquiry and give timescales. Inform the customer of any additional action that they will need to take to enable us to resolve their enquiry.	No longer applies	Customer service team has moved to Lomond House
Offer the customer, where necessary, a private interview here at St. David House or the opportunity to attend one of the Revenues Surgeries held at the various Council Information Service offices.	No longer applies	Customer service team has moved to Lomond House
Mail Room	2007/08	Notes
Ensure that all mail received in our office is scanned and indexed within 24 hours of receipt.	Target is met the majority of the time.	There are some exceptions during busy periods or periods of staff shortages.
Benefit Team Service Standards	2007/08	Notes
To process all new claims within 36 days of the date of receipt	25 days	
To process all new claims within 14 days of receiving all necessary information	91%	Performance Standards target is a 4 – we achieved a 4 on this measure.
To process all change of circumstances within 9 days	4.4 days	

To let you know quickly if we require any additional information from you	See new claims and change of circumstances measure above.	Links to our performance on new claims and changes
To request original documents, information and other evidence to support any new claim or change of circumstances as detailed in the Verification Framework	Verification Framework Compliant	
To look at your claim again if you think that we have got our decision wrong	47 reconsiderations logged. 41 dealt with within 4 weeks – 87% 4 appeals sent to the Tribunal Service – all sent within 4 weeks	
To ensure that the final overpayment amount of Council Tax Benefit and/or Housing Benefit is calculated taking into account any underlying entitlement and un-cashed cheques within 14 days of receiving the information	We have not been able to prove that we are meeting this enabler, however, a recent audit of Overpayments suggested from the sample taken that we had meet the requirements.	Enabler 13 of the Performance Standards.
To look at each claim on an individual basis when deciding whether a recoverable overpayment should be recovered, from whom, when, and at what rate it should be recovered	Compliant with Performance Standards enablers, E11, E12, E15 and E16.	These enablers cover the area of overpayments and we have sufficient evidence to prove this is meet.
To ensure a high level of accuracy is achieved when dealing with any aspect of a claim for Council Tax Benefit and/or Housing Benefit	99% of the calculations checked were accurate.	Correct calculations PM6 of the performance standards