



Audit Committee

16 December 2013

Report title	Benefit Sanctions – amendment to arrangements	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paul Sweet Governance and Performance	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Delivery	
Originating service	Audit	
Accountable employee(s)	Peter Farrow Tel Email	Head of Audit 01902 554460 peter.farrow@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Not applicable	

Recommendations for noting:

The Committee is asked to note:

1. The minor changes to arrangements regarding the approval of sanctions for housing and council tax benefit fraud.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee regarding a minor change in the approval of sanctions, as a result of the revised management arrangements for the benefits fraud team.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Audit Committee approved the current sanctions policy for housing and council tax benefit fraud on 20 July 2009. Under the provisions of this policy, decisions on sanctions are taken by 'the Chief Financial Officer or through delegation, by the Head of Benefits'. In practice, this is effected through the following process:

1. Benefit investigators investigate cases and recommend appropriate sanctions in accordance with the criteria set out in the approved sanctions policy.
2. Case files are passed to the benefit fraud manager for review, quality check and application of the public interest test.
3. Periodically, when a number of cases are accumulated, arrangements are made for the head of revenue and benefits to review the files and ensure that the recommended sanctions are in accordance with the approved sanctions policy.
4. Formal authorisation of the sanctions is provided by the head of revenue and benefits.

- 2.2 With effect from 1 December 2013 management of the benefit fraud team has transferred to internal audit.

3.0 Variation to Sanctions Policy

- 3.1 Following the transfer of management responsibilities for the benefit fraud team to internal audit, it is considered logical that internal audit management (the head of audit and senior audit manager) should be responsible for the implementation and authorisation of sanctions in line with the sanctions policy, alongside the head of revenue and benefits. The sanctions policy has been revised to this effect.
- 3.2 All other provisions of the sanctions policy remain the same, although a review of the policy is to be undertaken in the coming months and further revisions may be sought if deemed necessary. If so, these will be brought before the Audit Committee.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. (CN/06122013/V)

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. (JH/281113/V)

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

9.0 Schedule of background papers - None