

## Appendix D – Benefits Intervention

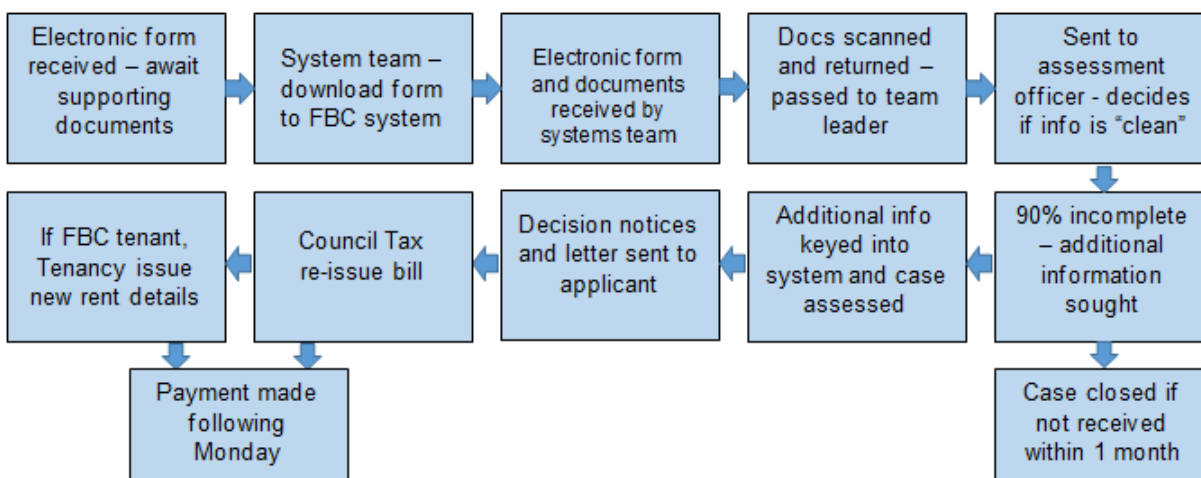
### Benefits

In 2014, the Benefits intervention team reviewed the way in which they processed claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. Annually, the team receive approximately 1,200 new claims and 16,000 reports of changes in circumstances from claimants.

#### The old approach Purpose: To make decisions quickly

Under the old approach, the average time to process new claims was 20 days, although in reality it could take between 1 and 50 days. 90% of all claims were incomplete, so a large amount of time was spent chasing for further information.

The computer generated letters resulted in 75% of officer time spent dealing with preventable demand such as “I don’t understand”, “I want my case reviewed”, “how much benefit am I getting” and “I want to appeal as I think my benefit award is wrong”.



#### The new approach Purpose: Help me receive the benefits I am entitled to quickly and easily

*“Top marks! It was handled extremely well so I knew exactly how much I was entitled to... it relieved my anxiety knowing what I would be paid and when”*

Customer feedback

The new approach sees officers providing a more tailored response to meet the needs of the individual and ensures that officers only do what matters to our customers, rather than getting caught up in complex procedures.

Following a team restructure, every customer is able to talk to a Benefits Assessment Officer who will deal with every aspect of their claim and, in the majority of cases, determine their benefit entitlement at the first point of contact.

There has been a 78% reduction in the number of formal review requests and a 100% reduction in the number of appeals. It now takes half the time to process new claims and a third of the time to process changes in circumstances. Preventable demand has fallen and the average time to process an application is now 9 days.

