

Benefits Team

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Strategy and Policy Statements



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High Peak Borough Council

www.highpeak.gov.uk

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Contents

1. **Our Corporate Vision and Ambitions for the Community**
2. **Our Mission**
3. **Our Policy Objectives**
4. **Customer Services Policy**
5. **Administration and Recovery of Overpayments Policy**
6. **Fraud Investigation Code of Practice and Procedures**

High Peak Borough Council

1.1 Our Vision

1. The Council's overall vision is to improve the quality of life in the High Peak. We monitor our progress by regularly checking how satisfied our residents are.

1.2 Our Ambitions for the Community

1. We have four main aims around which we have centred our ambitions for the community

Supporting People: To promote social inclusion and enable communities and individuals to participate in improving the quality of life in the High Peak

Creating Jobs and Prosperity: To create a thriving local economy that is responsive to the needs of local communities

Protecting the Environment: To enhance the quality of the local and global environment

Improving the Council: To be considered a high-performing

1.3. Our Core Values

1. We have a set of core values, which we will live up to in everything we do:

Leading the community

Achieving Excellence

Empowering people

Treating everyone equally

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1.4 Our Commitment to the Council's Vision

1. The needs of local residents are the starting point for everything we do. The commitment of our Councillors, employees and stakeholders is crucial in helping to meet these needs.
2. We will provide services that meet the expectations of our community and which at the same time are delivered in accordance with government guidelines

2.1 Our Mission

1. Our mission is to provide an efficient, cost effective and customer friendly Benefits service that both supports the Council's vision and ambitions and subscribes to its core values.
2. We will specifically

Deliver an effective Housing Benefit service that supports the broader strategic objectives of the Council and its stakeholders that help to improve the quality of life in the Borough

Provide a modern, customer-focused, efficient, effective, and secure housing benefit system that is continuously seeking to improve performance and outputs and reduce the risks of fraud and error,

Ensure that benefits administration be given the priority and resources needed to raise standards and promote social inclusion;

Deliver a cost effective service that provides value for money to all stakeholders and is responsive to the needs of local communities;

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Ensure that all involved with administering or claiming Housing Benefit understand what they must do to make the system effective and secure and achieve excellence in service provision and delivery.

3. In doing so, our service users will find that we

Ensure people are paid on time and receive the benefit to which they are entitled;

Are accessible by telephone, at local offices and by electronic means, such as email;

Deal with new claims, changes in circumstances and correspondence quickly and accurately;

Minimise barriers to work by providing information and assistance about eligibility to entitlement and process claims speedily;

Support people to live in decent housing through the prompt and accurate payment of benefit;

Minimise the potential for overpayment of benefit and where it occurs take all measures necessary to recover overpaid amounts

Protect the Council's finances by nature of an effective and efficient Benefits Service that always investigates potential fraud and punishes benefit fraudsters through the use of appropriate sanctions.

2.2 Publicity and Awareness

1. We will issue this document to all staff and stakeholders and validate staff awareness through staff surveys and performance appraisals supported by appropriate discussion in team meetings and performance feedback sessions

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3.1 Policy Objectives

1. We will make the Council's vision and our mission a reality through the efforts of a determined and committed Housing Benefit Team;

By ensuring that business results are linked to strategies and policies and are regularly reviewed using the business excellence model;

By the annual review and update of the Service improvement Plan consistently linked to the Council's corporate aims and objectives;

By having a Service Improvement Plan that is reviewed annually.

3.2 Development

1. We will develop new policies practices and procedures as appropriate.
2. We work in partnership with our key stakeholders to identify how our service compliments their aims and objectives in order to achieve a cohesive approach to wider strategies affecting the community.

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3.3 Our approach

1. We will adopt a transparent and customer inclusive approach to service delivery that will include

The nature and extent of Customer Access to, and satisfaction with, the quality our Service

Delivering demonstrable improvements in our performance using the National Indicator N181 to measure our success

Adopting a Right First Time approach to eliminate errors from the system

Matching workloads and priorities with resources to ensure that service delivery is consistent and directed where most needed

Learning from best practice utilising measure in the HB/CTB Performance data and benchmarking.

2. In particular we will invest in the Service by

Using the latest technology to enhance performance and efficiency savings

Working in partnership with other local authorities and external organisations to develop innovation in service delivery

Ensuring staff are trained, motivated and resourced to meet customer expectations

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Securing appropriate funding to ensure team members are suitably skilled and rewarded for effort.