

Charter for Customers

- Always put you first and treat you fairly and as an individual.
- Adopt a friendly and approachable style.
- Be open, straightforward and listen to you.
- Provide well trained staff who will deal with your enquiry in an efficient and sensitive manner.
- Deal with your request at the first point of contact where possible.
- Take ownership of your enquiry.
- Ensure that you are advised of all relevant timescales.
- Treat the personal information received in the strictest confidence.
- Conduct regular surveys to obtain your feedback.
- Take notice of, act on and learn from your feedback.
- Continually aim to improve our service and performance.

Bracknell Forest is committed to ensuring that benefit is only paid to those who are entitled. If you know of someone who you think may be committing fraud, please call 01344 351307.

Or if you would like to leave a message call CHEATCHASERS on 0800 590437, its confidential and free (from landline).

The following organisations can also offer advice

Citizens Advise Bureau

40-42 The Broadway,
Bracknell
Berkshire
Telephone: 0844 4994107
www.bracknellcab.org.uk

Information is also available from:

www.dwp.go.uk
www.ageconcern.org.uk
lha-direct.voa.gov.uk

Benefits Service
Time Square
Market Street
PO Box 3781
Bracknell
Berkshire RG12 1JD
Phone: 01344 352010
Minicom: 01344 352045
Email: benefits@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Website: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Copies of this document may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio tape or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format, please telephone 01344 352000.

© Design and Print Services 2010

Housing and council tax
benefits service



Benefits Service Standards

The aim of the Benefits Service is to ensure that we pay the right benefit to the right person at the right time.

This leaflets tell you:

- The standard of service we aim to provide.
- What you can do to help us help you.
- What you can do if things go wrong or you do not agree with our decision.

Service Standards for when you contact us:

By telephone

- We will be available to answer your call between the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.
- We will aim to answer 75% of calls within 20 seconds of you joining the queue.
- When answering the call we will give the name of our service and give the name of the officer.
- If we cannot deal with your enquiry at the time of the call or if you leave a message we will call you back within 2 working days.
- We will provide a minicom textphone service for customers who require this.

By email

- We will acknowledge your email within 1 day, and aim to answer your enquiry within 5 working days.

If you come to see us:

- Our reception is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm.
- If you have an appointment with us you will be seen within 10 minutes of your appointment.

- For those without an appointment waiting times will be kept as short as possible.
- We will discuss your enquiry in a private interview room.
- Upon request in advance we will provide a translator whenever possible.
- A loop system available for customers who require this.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's)

- We will acknowledge your DHP application within 1 working day and aim to respond within 14 days.

Service Standards for Home Visits

- If you are a vulnerable customer who is unable to attend the office due to disability or medical condition then we will arrange to visit you within 7 days of your request.
- If you are a tenant of a registered social landlord who provides visiting services then the benefits service may advise the landlord visiting officer of the need for a visit and provide advice via that route.

Service Standards for your claim

- If we receive your claim complete with all the necessary evidence needed we will aim to process your claim within 2 working days.
- For all other new claims we will aim to process any new claims for benefit within 22 days.

- We will aim to process any changes of circumstances within 7 days.
- We will send you a written decision about your entitlement once we have processed your new claim or change or circumstances.
- If you have provided a Housing Benefit Review and if this has resulted in no change to your benefit entitlement we will endeavour to contact you by telephone or email to confirm that there are no changes to your benefit.
- We will try to advise customers of any other benefits they may be entitled to

What we would like from you

- To provide all the information we ask from you when we ask for it - this will help us to speed up your claim.
- To read all the information that we send you - it is important.

Service Standards for Appeals and Complaints

- We will acknowledge your appeal within 1 working day and aim to respond within 28 days.
- If you need to use our complaints service, we will acknowledge your complaint within one working day and provide a full written answer within 10 working days.