

Appendix A - Benefits Improvement Plan 2014/15

Description of Task	Action to be taken	Improvement to Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure there is a link between the Benefits Service Plan and the Finance Service Plan. ▪ Review benefits information on leaflets, forms and Council website. ▪ Ensure we continue to access the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Customer Information Service (CIS), which provides local authorities with information on customers receiving benefits and tax credits, via the Employee Authentication Service ▪ Ensure we can receive award information for a range of DWP and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) tax credits, in a format that will allow direct loading into our Benefits system. ▪ Keep our customers, the Shetland public, Councillors and landlords notified of the welfare reform changes ▪ Review all existing procedures, policies and Service Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the amount of Benefits information within the Finance Service Plan with the aim to look at expanding the content for benefits. ▪ Update the Council website for benefits, review forms and leaflets. ▪ Ensure all Council staff requiring access to CIS are registered with the Employee Authentication Service. ▪ Take part in the DWP Automated Transfers to Local Authority Systems (ATLAS) Project ▪ Produce and update our Welfare Reform Briefing Paper with any further information statistics as and when available ▪ Review documentation on an annual basis and make amendments, if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a link to Corporate Plan/Single Outcome Agreement. ▪ This will ensure that the different sources of information we provide is kept up to date, consistent and relevant. ▪ Improved secure access to information databases such as the Customer Information System, which will subject Benefit Section staff to a rigorous authentication procedure before access to the system is permitted. ▪ Improve the flow of information from HMRC. Receiving information automatically in this way will reduce overpayments and underpayments of benefit. In particular this will help where the customer fails to notify the local authority of a claim or change, or provides the information late. ▪ This will ensure that the different sources of information we provide our customers is kept up to date, consistent and relevant ▪ Reviewing these annually will ensure that they keep in line with current working practices and legislation.