

## Performance Surgery Update Template – BV78a and BV78b

### PART A – OVERVIEW

<b>Title of Indicators:</b>	<b>78a Average time taken to process new benefit claims</b> <b>78b Average time taken to process notification of changes to benefit claims</b>
<b>Portfolio:</b>	<b>Neighbourhood, Social Cohesion and Housing Strategy</b>
<b>Scrutiny Commission:</b>	<b>Community</b>
<b>Accountable Officer:</b>	<b>Mark Holmes</b>
<b>Assistant Director:</b>	<b>Kath Kennedy</b>

### PART B – ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Refer to the original performance template produced in August 2007 (as attached in Performance Eye) and the updated performance checklist and analysis in **Annexes A and B.**

The Accountable Officer will provide a verbal update on recent progress against actions listed in Part C at the November Performance Surgery.

## **PART C – RESULTS OF PERFORMANCE SURGERY HELD ON AUGUST 2007**

### **Attendees:**

Councillor Amar Nath  
Lisa Callow  
Mark Menzies  
Mark Holmes  
Heather Greenan  
Nadya Dunayeva  
Rob Davidson  
Mahroof Hussain  
David Brewin  
Martin Gadsby  
Phil Davies

### **1. What were the main causes of underperformance discussed?**

- System conversion and the 4 weeks closure caused underperformance due to the lead-time required. Moreover, it has taken staff longer than anticipated to adapt to the system changes. Therefore the rate of recovery post-conversion has been slower than expected – although quarter one figures do indicate an improvement in BV78a (34 days).
- The fact that only 1/3 of all forms can be processed without the need for further information. In those cases where further information is required, applicants are allowed 30 days to provide the required evidence.
- Councillor Nath asked whether certain types of information were more likely to be ‘missing’ and whether the relevant part of the benefits form could be better explained or promoted to claimants before they submit the claim. Mark Holmes confirmed that missing information can vary between applications.
- Some work has been undertaken to review processing and completeness rates by source e.g. Derby Direct, Housing Options, Derby Homes, DWP. Refresher training is planned and will be targeted on specific issues identified.
- The constraints of the Verification Framework do affect processing rates. Ensuring robust evidence whilst maintaining customer friendly revision processes is important. Encouraging a customer friendly culture will not only help to improve relationships with customers, but also solve some of the BVPI problems. There has certainly been an increase in satisfaction rates by benefit claimants between 2003 and 2006.
- The benefits backlog has affected recovery of tenant rent arrears. Phil Davies queried whether more linkages could be made between the rents and benefits systems on Academy - to better use the information available (taking into account any data protection issues).
- The service has undertaken visits to Birmingham and Nottingham authorities to look at areas for improvement. In some cases, good performance in BV78 is due to more resources per claim.

**2. What actions were agreed to improve performance? Has an action plan been prepared?**

- An improvement plan has already been put in place to remove the backlog of new claims.
- Focus effort on ensuring a 'right first time' approach.
- Re-engineering review of Benefits process e.g. in-built system reminder for further information at 15 days.
- Better communication e.g. use of tailored teams to deal with specific claimants, use of text messaging etc.
- Develop service level arrangements with partners for completeness of claims etc.
- Raising awareness regarding process delays amongst customer service and partner staff e.g. refresher training.
- Cllr Nath asked what percentage improvement in completeness of claims would be required to meet the national targets for BV78a and b.

**3. What are the resource implications of these actions?**

- Risks: cost, fraud, overpaying claims, inconsistency, time.

**4. What are the timescales?**

- Performance will be reviewed at the next Performance Surgery in November.

**5. When will progress be reported to Scrutiny?**

- 1 October – Community Commission meeting.

## Underperformance Checklist – Updated at Q2 2007/08

**Name of Indicators: BV78a Average time taken to process new benefit claims and BV78b Average time taken to process notification of changes to benefit claims**

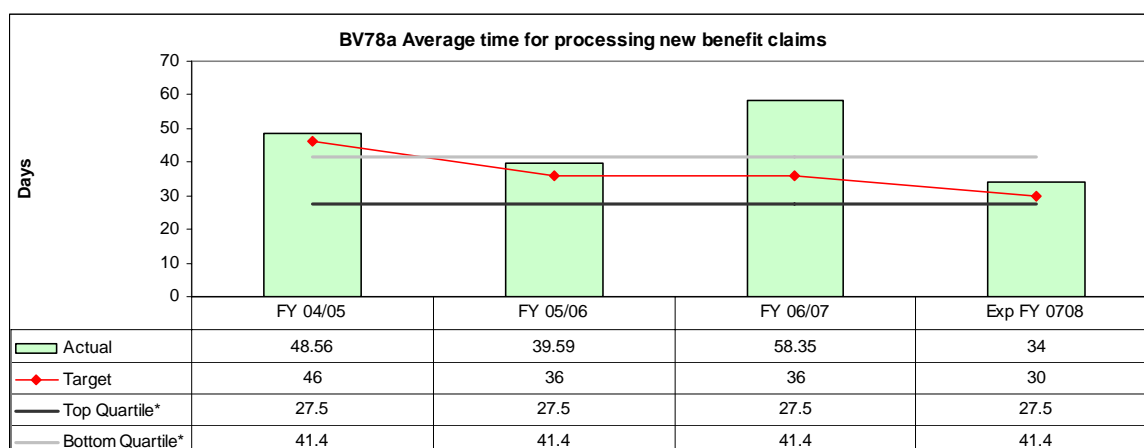
Criteria	Evaluation		Comments
	Yes	No	
<p>Is the indicator failing to meet target?</p> <p>Is the indicator 'red' or 'amber'</p>	Yes		<p><b>BV78a</b> - At the end of Q2, performance of just below 33 days fell within the quarterly target of 40 days, consequently the indicator was categorised as 'green'. The current year end forecast of 34 days is above the annual target of 30 days.</p> <p><b>BV78b</b> – Q2 performance exceeded the quarterly target of 15 days by 25%, consequently the indicator was categorised as 'red'. The current year end forecast of 15 days is above the annual target of 13 days.</p>
<p>Was the target the unrealistic?</p> <p>Was the target stretching enough or has the target been missed by a significant amount?</p>	N/A		<p>The targets set for this indicator are in line with national standards published by the Department for Work and Pensions.</p>
<p>Is the direction of travel deteriorating?</p>	Yes		<p><b>78a</b> – Performance for Q1 and Q2 has shown significant improvement against 2006/07 quarterly results.</p> <p><b>78b</b> - Performance against this indicator has deteriorated since the last quarter of 2006/07.</p>

Criteria	Evaluation		Comments
	Yes	No	
<p>Do we compare poorly with other authorities?</p> <p>Are we in the bottom or lower median quartile compared to all unitary authorities? <i>BVPs only</i></p>	Yes		<p><b>78a</b> - At the end of 2006/07 the performance result of 58.35 days placed the indicator within the bottom quartile for all unitary authorities. The current year end forecast for 2007/08 indicates we may achieve lower median quartile performance.</p> <p><b>78b</b> - At the end of both 2005/06 and 2006/07 performance was classified as lower median performance. The current year end forecast for 2007/08 indicates we may achieve lower median quartile performance.</p>
<p>Has our position compared to our peers declined over the past 12 months?</p>	Yes		<p><b>78a</b> - At the end of 2005/06 performance was categorised as falling within the upper median threshold, which signified an improvement from the 2004/05 result where performance was classified as lower median. The 2006/07 outturn has resulted in a bottom quartile categorisation.</p> <p><b>78b</b> - The rate of change locally indicates that our performance is deteriorating quicker than the national trend. Between 2004/05 and 2005/06 a fall in local performance of 43.1% was recorded, which compared to an average slippage in the bottom quartile threshold for all unitary authorities of 24.6%. Additionally, a further deterioration in local performance has been recorded between 2005/06 and 2006/07, which may impact on our position relative to peers when the 2006/07 national data is published.</p>
<p>Is the performance of the indicator moving in a different direction to the national trend?</p> <p>Only tick 'yes' if movement of the indicator is negative. <i>BVPs only</i></p>	Yes		<p><b>78a</b> - The national data for 2004/05 and 2005/06 shows that there has been a decline in the time that it takes to process new benefit claims. Local information mirrored this trend for 2004/05 and 2005/06 however the 2006/07 results has moved the indicator in a different direction.</p> <p>The national quartile data for 2004/05 and 2005/06 is set out below...</p> <p>Bottom Quartile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2004/05 – 61.1 days</li> </ul>

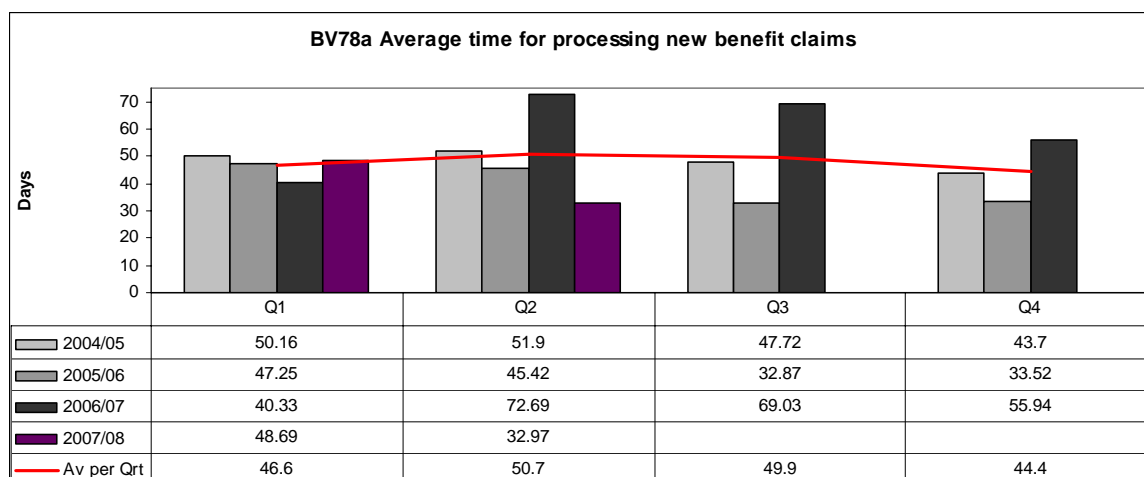
Criteria	Evaluation		Comments
	Yes	No	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2005/06 – 41.4 days</li> </ul> <p>Top Quartile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2004/05 – 33.8 days</li> <li>• 2005/06 – 27.5 days</li> </ul> <p>If national data continues to improve performance will slip further below the bottom quartile threshold when the national 2006/07 data is release in late 2007.</p> <p><b>78b</b> - Both local and national data available indicates that there have been deteriorations in performance against this indicator. A full analysis of how we currently compare to peers is not possible until the 2006/07 quartile data is released.</p>
Does the indicator support a corporate priority?	<b>Yes</b>		These indicators directly support the priority – “Giving you excellent services and value for money”.
Is this indicator a Comprehensive Performance Assessment or Local Area Agreement indicator?	<b>Yes</b>		Both indicators form part of the suite of key indicators that are assessed to determine the council’s annual direction of travel.
Has the indicator been previously highlighted as underperforming in the last 12 months?	<b>Yes</b>		These indicators have previously been highlighted as underperforming in the annual Best Value Performance Plan and in the quarterly performance monitoring reports.

## BV 78a Historical Performance Results – Updated at Q2 2007/08

The graph below sets out the performance results for this indicator over the past three years; compared to the 2005/06 quartile positions. The 2007/08 figure is based on the current year-end forecast at Q2, which indicates performance at 34 days compared to target of 30 days. This performance would represent lower median quartile when compared to other unitary authorities.



In 2007/08 Q1 performance is better than the previous quarter, but is not favourable when compared to the same quarter in 2005/06 and 2006/07. Performance in Q2 has improved significantly.



Comments entered into Performance Eye by the indicator's Accountable Officer are set out below...

### Quarter 1 2007/08

*The benefits section has implemented further changes to deliver improvements in the time taken to process benefit changes. This has lead to some improvements in quarter one, which have seen the seen the backlog of outstanding claims significantly reduce.*

*Improvement in the BVPI for changes will be realised less quickly than new claims as the standard is 10 days as opposed to 30 days. Changes to business processes will deliver sustainable improvements in performance to national standard.*

#### **Quarter 2 2007/08**

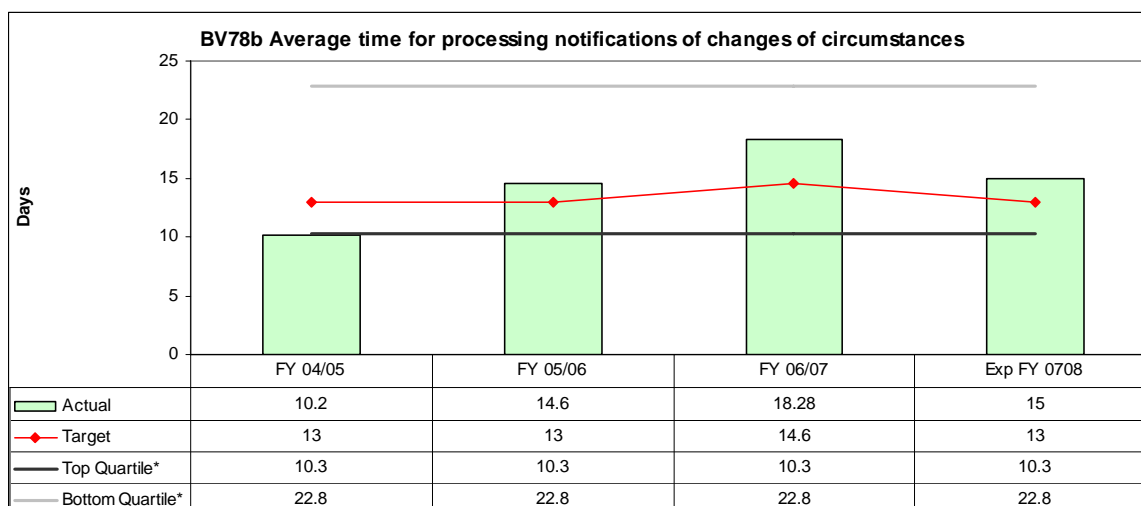
*Achieving target for processing changes has become increasingly more challenging because of changes made to what constitute a 'benefit change'. Reorganising teams and processes has taken place to balance achievement of this target and BVPI78a.*

*Our Performance Improvement Group has focused activity and prioritised BVPI78a for new claims during Q1 & 2 and that has demonstrated significant improvements. The focus of this group will now shift to BVPI78a b for Q3.*



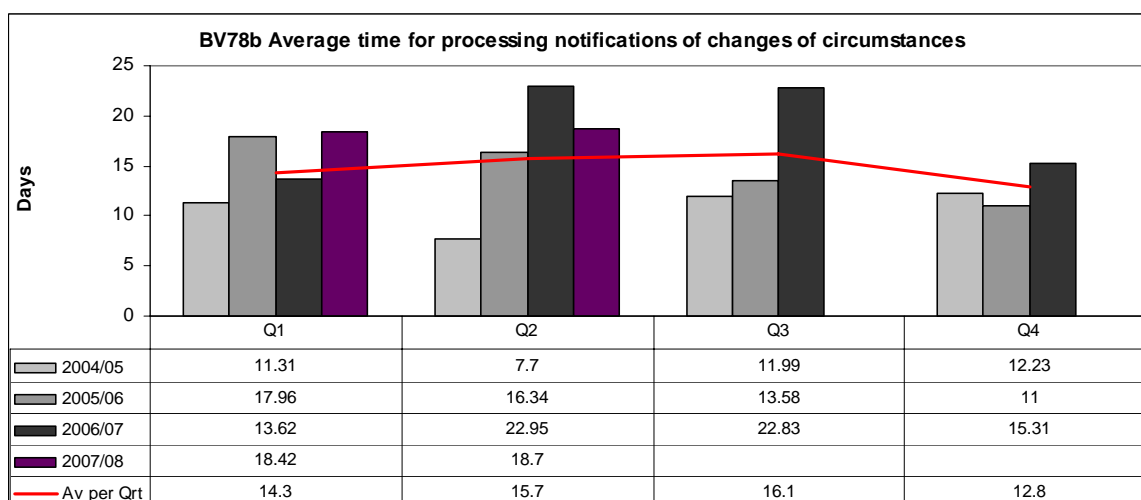
## BV78b Historical Performance Results

The graph below sets out the performance results for this indicator over the past three years; compared to the 2005/06 quartile positions. The 2007/08 figure is based on the current year-end forecast at Q2, which indicates performance at 15 days compared to target of 13 days. This performance would represent lower median quartile when compared to other unitary authorities.



The graph below sets out the quarterly performance results for the past few years; compared to the average processing time for each quarter.

In 2007/08 Q1 performance is worse than the previous quarter and is not favourable when compared to the same quarter in 2006/07. Performance in Q2 has deteriorated marginally.



The comments entered into Performance Eye by the indicator's Accountable Officer at the end of 2006/07 are the same as BV78a.