



## Charnwood Borough Council

### BVPI Benefits Service Survey 2006 - 2007

#### Final Report

#### **I. Introduction**

The consultation was carried out by the Communications, Consultations and Partnerships Team between July 2006 – March 2007.

The aims of the survey were as follows:

- To assess current % of benefit claimants satisfied with the service to inform future service planning / design and provision.
- To identify changes in levels of satisfaction from the 2003/2004 survey.
- To identify whether we have achieved our BVPI targets for the percentage of people satisfied with various aspects of the service.
- To collect data to ensure that we are engaging with our customers and providing services that meet their needs and expectations.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

##### **2.1 Methodology**

The methodology of the BVPI surveys was prescribed in detail by the ODPM (Now DCLG - Department for Communities and Local Government ).

##### **Survey Type**

The type of survey used was postal. This single prescribed method for all authorities was chosen so that data is comparable across all authorities. For reasons of cost, this method had to be a postal survey. This proposal was included in the pre-survey consultation and a large majority of respondents were in favour of this methodology.

## Sample Method

The target population for the sample was all individuals who pursued new or renewal of claim of housing and/or council tax benefit and were notified of the decision of the claim during the sampling windows\* This included those where the following three criteria had all been met – a claim form has been submitted, a decision has been made and the individual has been notified of a decision.

The list of claimants surveyed had to include the following:

- New and renewal claims
- Rent allowances and rebate claims
- Successful and unsuccessful claims
- Claims for council tax benefit including second adult rebates.
- Claims from different individuals within a single household.

It had to exclude:

- Claims withdrawn before the individual had been notified of a decision.
- Claimants being including no more than once in a sampling window (if they have made multiple claims).

\*There were two sample windows to take into account seasonal effects (e.g. employment in tourism). For each a list of individuals that meet the above criteria must be drawn up. These windows were: 1/06/06 – 31/07/06 and 01/11/06 – 31/12/06. The data referred to below is a combination of the results of both windows.

The sample method used was census – in other words every eligible person within the windows was asked to complete a survey.

## The Questionnaire

All BVPI surveys had to use the questionnaire templates provided to them by the Audit Commission on behalf of the ODPM.

We were able to “Charnwoodize” the design of the survey (e.g. change the name of a service) but **could not alter the order** in which the mandatory questions were presented or change the meaning/wording of the questions.

## 2.2 Response Rate

### Sample Size

The ODPM required that a minimum of **312** respondents needed to be achieved in the first window and **313** in the 2<sup>nd</sup> (for a combined total of **625**).

### Response Rate Achieved

A total of **330** valid responses were received and submitted to the audit commission for analysis in the first window and **445** in the second window (**775 overall**). This was a response rate of **45%** and **38%** respectively.

## **2.3 Relevant BVPI Headline Indicators**

See the table below at 3.1

## **2.4 Reliability of Results**

This is a measurement of reliability – of how confident you can be that the responses of your sample are representative of the whole population.

*E.g. If 1,000 people in Charnwood responded, how confident can you be that the answers they give would be the same if you asked all Charnwood Residents.*

This is measured as a percentage, which represents the margin of error. The most frequently used confidence interval is 95%. This means that 95 times out of a hundred your results will be reliable with a margin of error of - for example – 3.15% either way. So, if the BV80a result is 76% satisfied we can be confident that if we asked every service user the result would at worst be 72.85% and at best 79.15%

See the **Confidence Intervals** for this survey in the table below (3.1).

## **3. Main Findings**

This section identifies the main findings of the survey. The information shown is in an un-weighted format. Weighted data will be provided by the audit commission for the BVPI Headline Indicator questions at a later date and will be added to the report at this time. It is expected that this will be available in late spring – early summer 07.

### **BVPI Scores**

The following table identifies satisfaction with various aspects of the service.

The **Sample** size is the number of respondents to the survey who answered the particular BVPI question asked – not the whole survey.

The **BVPI Score** is the percentage of respondents satisfied with the service the indicator refers to. This percentage is a combination of the respondents who answered “very satisfied” and “satisfied”. In the results below you will sometimes see this combination referred to as “to some extent satisfied”. The BVPI scores are as follows:

(See next page)

| BVPI   | Sample     | Confidence Interval | 06-07 BVPI Score | 03- 04 BVPI Score | 00-01 BVPI Score    |
|--|------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| <b>BV80a</b> - Satisfaction with Contact with the Office | <b>710</b> | <b>3.15</b>         | <b>76</b>        | <b>79</b>         | <b>Not Measured</b> |
| <b>BV80b</b> - Satisfaction with Service in the Office   | <b>453</b> | <b>4.13</b>         | <b>72</b>        | <b>83</b>         | <b>Not Measured</b> |
| <b>BV80c</b> - Satisfaction with Telephone Service       | <b>338</b> | <b>4.96</b>         | <b>68</b>        | <b>72</b>         | <b>Not Measured</b> |
| <b>BV80d</b> - Satisfaction with Staff in the Office     | <b>688</b> | <b>3.13</b>         | <b>77</b>        | <b>84</b>         | <b>Not Measured</b> |
| <b>BV80e</b> - Satisfaction with Forms                   | <b>687</b> | <b>3.7</b>          | <b>57</b>        | <b>66</b>         | <b>Not Measured</b> |
| <b>BV80f</b> - Satisfaction with Speed of Service        | <b>740</b> | <b>3.42</b>         | <b>66</b>        | <b>74</b>         | <b>Not Measured</b> |
| <b>BV80g</b> – Overall Satisfaction with the service     | <b>738</b> | <b>3.1</b>          | <b>75</b>        | <b>48</b>         | <b>Not Measured</b> |

### **Other Findings**

The full results can be found in the tables show below at Appendix A.

Almost 60% of respondents had visited the benefits office when making their most recent claim.

Overall, the impression respondents had of staff in the office was generally positive (see question 6). 68% thought that staff were friendly and 63% felt that they were treated with respect. 59% felt things were explained clearly to them but 40% didn't.

When asked about the benefits form (question 7), around a third of staff felt the form was difficult to fill in and 40% felt that it couldn't be filled in quickly. Almost half of respondents (48%) felt that the information that came with the form was helpful.

When asked what most needed improving about the benefits service, the highest response was for the time it takes to tell them if a claim has been successful (82 respondents) and the claim form (54 respondents).

The free text responses to this survey will be provided separately to services due to the large volume.



### Full Data

The following percentages are based upon the total number of respondents rather than responses to individual questions. This is the same way that we were required to submit the data to the audit commission.

This means that the % used below are based upon totals that include not answered. Therefore, when considering what the data shows us it is important to consider the impact of this and you may wish to exclude the "not answered's" and recalculate the percentages for your own purposes. This will have the impact of raising other percentages – obviously, how much this is by will be dependent on the number of not answered's.

However, it is worth noting that the BVPI indicator results detailed in the table above are based upon totals that have had the “not answered” responses excluded. This will also be the case for the final BVPI scores sent to us by the Audit Commission.

#### Q1. Agreement with statements about getting in touch with the benefits office

|   | Strongly agree | Agree           | Neither     | Disagree        | Strongly disagree | Doesn't apply /don't know | Not answered   |
|---|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| The local benefits office is somewhere that is easy for me to get to                    | 46<br>(13.98%) | 155<br>(47.11%) | 31 (9.42%)  | 32 (9.73%)      | 10 (3.04%)        | 27 (8.21%)                | 28<br>(8.51%)  |
| The local benefits office's opening hours are inconvenient for me                       | 25<br>(7.60%)  | 56<br>(17.02%)  | 61 (18.54%) | 108<br>(32.83%) | 19 (5.78%)        | 26 (7.90%)                | 34<br>(10.33%) |
| Staff tried to sort out my claim on the phone so I didn't have to go into the office    | 24<br>(7.29%)  | 49<br>(14.89%)  | 41 (12.46%) | 70<br>(21.28%)  | 37<br>(11.25%)    | 72<br>(21.88%)            | 36<br>(10.94%) |
| I was given the name of a person at the local benefits office to contact about my claim | 11<br>(3.34%)  | 51<br>(15.50%)  | 31 (9.42%)  | 105<br>(31.91%) | 42<br>(12.77%)    | 48<br>(14.59%)            | 41<br>(12.46%) |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the ways in which I can contact the local benefits office  | 39<br>(11.85%) | 164<br>(49.85%) | 46 (13.98%) | 30 (9.12%)      | 12 (3.65%)        | 8 (2.43%)                 | 30<br>(9.12%)  |

Q2. Whether visited local authority benefits office when most recent claim was made

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Yes          | 194 (58.97%) |
| No           | 105 (31.91%) |
| Not answered | 30 (9.12%)   |

Q3. Agreement with statements about visiting local authority benefits office

|   | Strongly agree | Agree        | Neither     | Disagree    | Strongly disagree | Doesn't apply /Don't know | Not answered |
|---|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| I had to wait a long time before I saw the person I needed to                               | 27 (8.21%)     | 51 (15.50%)  | 29 (8.81%)  | 70 (21.28%) | 10 (3.04%)        | 15 (4.56%)                | 127 (38.60%) |
| I could talk with this person in a private place if I wanted to                             | 19 (5.78%)     | 95 (28.88%)  | 22 (6.69%)  | 17 (5.17%)  | 6 (1.82%)         | 40 (12.16%)               | 130 (39.51%) |
| The local authority benefits office was "clean and tidy"                                    | 56 (17.02%)    | 113 (34.35%) | 7 (2.13%)   | 3 (0.91%)   | 6 (1.82%)         | 15 (4.56%)                | 129 (39.21%) |
| More seats are needed in my local authority benefits office                                 | 8 (2.43%)      | 13 (3.95%)   | 56 (17.02%) | 81 (24.62%) | 14 (4.26%)        | 26 (7.90%)                | 131 (39.82%) |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of visiting the local authority benefits office | 31 (9.42%)     | 98 (29.79%)  | 26 (7.90%)  | 21 (6.38%)  | 8 (2.43%)         | 11 (3.34%)                | 134 (40.73%) |

Q4. Whether telephoned local authority benefits office when claim was made

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Yes          | 123 (37.39%) |
| No           | 173 (52.58%) |
| Not answered | 33 (10.03%)  |

Q5. Agreement with statements about telephoning local benefits office

|  | Strongly agree | Agree       | Neither    | Disagree    | Strongly disagree | Doesn't apply /Don't know | Not answered |
|--|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| The telephone call I made to the local benefits office was answered quickly                      | 13 (3.95%)     | 83 (25.23%) | 12 (3.65%) | 15 (4.56%)  | 7 (2.13%)         | 3 (0.91%)                 | 196 (59.57%) |
| When I made call to the local benefits office I was transferred between several different people | 14 (4.26%)     | 32 (9.73%)  | 17 (5.17%) | 56 (17.02%) | 7 (2.13%)         | 4 (1.22%)                 | 199 (60.49%) |
| Once the call to my local benefits office had been answered, my query was dealt with swiftly     | 15 (4.56%)     | 63 (19.15%) | 14 (4.26%) | 19 (5.78%)  | 13 (3.95%)        | 5 (1.52%)                 | 200 (60.79%) |
| When I called the local benefits office it was difficult to speak to the right member of staff   | 10 (3.04%)     | 22 (6.69%)  | 24 (7.29%) | 53 (16.11%) | 12 (3.65%)        | 9 (2.74%)                 | 199 (60.49%) |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the telephone service provided by my local benefits office          | 16 (4.86%)     | 73 (22.19%) | 13 (3.95%) | 12 (3.65%)  | 16 (4.86%)        | 2 (0.61%)                 | 197 (59.88%) |

Q6. Agreement with statements about the staff in local benefits office

|  | Strongly agree | Agree        | Neither     | Disagree     | Strongly disagree | Doesn't apply /Don't know | Not answered |
|--|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Staff in the local benefits office were friendly                                       | 67 (20.36%)    | 157 (47.72%) | 28 (8.51%)  | 11 (3.34%)   | 8 (2.43%)         | 35 (10.64%)               | 23 (6.99%)   |
| I wasn't always confident that what the staff said was correct                         | 22 (6.69%)     | 70 (21.28%)  | 54 (16.41%) | 91 (27.66%)  | 20 (6.08%)        | 39 (11.85%)               | 33 (10.03%)  |
| Things were explained in a way I could understand                                      | 41 (12.46%)    | 153 (46.50%) | 36 (10.94%) | 29 (8.81%)   | 10 (3.04%)        | 33 (10.03%)               | 27 (8.21%)   |
| I felt unable to ask the questions I wanted to   | 5 (1.52%)      | 36 (10.94%)  | 49 (14.89%) | 147 (44.68%) | 28 (8.51%)        | 37 (11.25%)               | 27 (8.21%)   |
| Staff were in a rush   | 8 (2.43%)      | 28 (8.51%)   | 38 (11.55%) | 146 (44.38%) | 39 (11.85%)       | 41 (12.46%)               | 29 (8.81%)   |
| Staff treated me with respect  | 57 (17.33%)    | 152 (46.20%) | 30 (9.12%)  | 16 (4.86%)   | 16 (4.86%)        | 32 (9.73%)                | 26 (7.90%)   |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the service provided by staff in my local benefits office | 50 (15.20%)    | 140 (42.55%) | 47 (14.29%) | 24 (7.29%)   | 18 (5.47%)        | 20 (6.08%)                | 30 (9.12%)   |

Q7. Agreement with statements about the forms filled in to claim benefits

|   | Strongly agree | Agree        | Neither     | Disagree     | Strongly disagree | Doesn't apply /Don't know | Not answered |
|---|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| The Housing/ Council Tax form was difficult to fill in                    | 37 (11.25%)    | 74 (22.49%)  | 61 (18.54%) | 91 (27.66%)  | 13 (3.95%)        | 24 (7.29%)                | 29 (8.81%)   |
| I could fill the form in quickly  | 9 (2.74%)      | 80 (24.32%)  | 56 (17.02%) | 100 (30.40%) | 33 (10.03%)       | 24 (7.29%)                | 27 (8.21%)   |
| The information that came with the form was helpful                       | 20 (6.08%)     | 137 (41.64%) | 69 (20.97%) | 30 (9.12%)   | 17 (5.17%)        | 25 (7.60%)                | 31 (9.42%)   |
| The letters sent about my claim were difficult to understand              | 42 (12.77%)    | 54 (16.41%)  | 52 (15.81%) | 115 (34.95%) | 15 (4.56%)        | 21 (6.38%)                | 30 (9.12%)   |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the Housing /Council Tax benefits claim form | 27 (8.21%)     | 122 (37.08%) | 63 (19.15%) | 44 (13.37%)  | 27 (8.21%)        | 19 (5.78%)                | 27 (8.21%)   |

Q8. Level of satisfaction with time taken to hear whether claim was successful

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Very satisfied      | 75 (22.80%)  |
| Fairly satisfied    | 105 (31.91%) |
| Neither             | 50 (15.20%)  |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 45 (13.68%)  |
| Very dissatisfied   | 34 (10.33%)  |
| Not answered        | 20 (6.08%)   |

Q9. Overall satisfaction with service from local benefits office

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Very satisfied      | 90 (27.36%)  |
| Fairly satisfied    | 120 (36.47%) |
| Neither             | 42 (12.77%)  |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 29 (8.81%)   |
| Very dissatisfied   | 25 (7.60%)   |
| Not answered        | 23 (6.99%)   |

Q10. Success of last benefits claim

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Successful   | 221 (67.17%) |
| Unsuccessful | 59 (17.93%)  |
| Don't know   | 28 (8.51%)   |
| Not answered | 21 (6.38%)   |

Q11. What most needs improving about local authority benefits service

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| The ways in which I can contact the local authority benefits office                          | 13 (3.95%)  |
| The experience of visiting the local authority benefits office                               | 13 (3.95%)  |
| The telephone service provided by the local authority benefits office                        | 10 (3.04%)  |
| The staff service in the local authority benefits service                                    | 10 (3.04%)  |
| The Housing/Council Tax benefits claim form  | 54 (16.41%) |
| The time it takes to tell me whether my claim for Housing/Council Tax benefit was successful | 82 (24.92%) |
| Other  | 25 (7.60%)  |
| Nothing  | 46 (13.98%) |
| Don't know   | 21 (6.38%)  |
| Not answered   | 55 (16.72%) |

Q12. Sex of respondent

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Male         | 129 (39.21%) |
| Female       | 173 (52.58%) |
| Not answered | 27 (8.21%)   |

Question 13 was a free text response question. The responses are available separate to this document.

Q14. How long at current accommodation

|                             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Under 1 year                | 84 (25.53%) |
| 1 - 2 years                 | 31 (9.42%)  |
| 3 - 5 years                 | 43 (13.07%) |
| 6 - 10 years                | 42 (12.77%) |
| 11 - 20 years               | 43 (13.07%) |
| 21 or more years            | 63 (19.15%) |
| Don't know / Can't remember | 5 (1.52%)   |
| Not answered                | 18 (5.47%)  |

Q15. How long in area

|                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Under 1 year                | 35 (10.64%)  |
| 1 - 2 years                 | 21 (6.38%)   |
| 3 - 5 years                 | 37 (11.25%)  |
| 6 - 10 years                | 29 (8.81%)   |
| 11 - 20 years               | 48 (14.59%)  |
| 21 or more years            | 133 (40.43%) |
| Don't know / Can't remember | 8 (2.43%)    |
| Not answered                | 18 (5.47%)   |

#### Q16. Home ownership

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Owned outright                        | 51 (15.50%) |
| Buying on mortgage                    | 59 (17.93%) |
| Rent from council                     | 77 (23.40%) |
| Rent from housing association / trust | 43 (13.07%) |
| Rented from private landlord          | 65 (19.76%) |
| Other                                 | 15 (4.56%)  |
| Not answered                          | 19 (5.78%)  |

#### Q17. Number of adults 18+

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| One            | 133 (40.43%) |
| Two            | 99 (30.09%)  |
| Three          | 22 (6.69%)   |
| Four           | 10 (3.04%)   |
| Five           | 5 (1.52%)    |
| More than five | 24 (7.29%)   |
| Not answered   | 36 (10.94%)  |

#### Q18. Employment

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Employee FT                  | 36 (10.94%) |
| Employee PT                  | 28 (8.51%)  |
| Self employed, FT or PT      | 9 (2.74%)   |
| Govt. supported training     | 2 (0.61%)   |
| Full time education          | 2 (0.61%)   |
| Unemployed                   | 63 (19.15%) |
| Permanently sick or disabled | 49 (14.89%) |
| Retired                      | 58 (17.63%) |
| Looking after the home       | 17 (5.17%)  |
| Other                        | 30 (9.12%)  |
| Not answered                 | 35 (10.64%) |

#### Q19. Illness

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Yes          | 120 (36.47%) |
| No           | 178 (54.10%) |
| Not answered | 31 (9.42%)   |

#### Q20. Limit activities

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Yes          | 102 (31.00%) |
| No           | 21 (6.38%)   |
| Not answered | 206 (62.61%) |

#### Q21. Ethnic Group

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| White British                   | 256 (77.81%) |
| White Irish                     | 4 (1.22%)    |
| White Other                     | 5 (1.52%)    |
| Mixed White and Black Caribbean | 1 (0.30%)    |
| Mixed White and Black African   | 0 (0.00%)    |
| Mixed White and Asian           | 2 (0.61%)    |
| Mixed Other                     | 0 (0.00%)    |
| Chinese                         | 2 (0.61%)    |
| Black/Black British Caribbean   | 3 (0.91%)    |
| Black/Black British African     | 1 (0.30%)    |
| Black/Black British Other       | 0 (0.00%)    |
| Asian Indian                    | 16 (4.86%)   |
| Asian Pakistani                 | 0 (0.00%)    |
| Asian Bangladeshi               | 2 (0.61%)    |
| Asian Other                     | 2 (0.61%)    |
| Other                           | 0 (0.00%)    |
| No answer                       | 35 (10.64%)  |