

# Stage one: Rapid Impact Assessment

## Part 1: Description/Consultation

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| Date of Assessment: 9 February 2017   |   |
| Title of document being assessed:<br><br><b>Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery and Debt Collection Procedure</b>                |   |
| 1. This is a new policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed<br><br>(If yes please check box) <input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><br>Update of existing policy only. Following a review by DWP of our Housing Benefit Overpayment procedures a small number of changes have been made to the procedure manual. Now using Walker Love to pursue debts where no recovery is possible and no payments have been received following normal follow up. Removed the reminder after 28 days - instead we go straight to final notice. Also introduced pro-active contact from the overpayment team to the debtor.   |
| 2. Please give a brief description of the policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed.                                 | The procedure document sets out Argyll and Bute Council's commitment to the recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments as laid down by The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006.<br><br>In all cases staff will act in accordance with relevant legislation, treat all citizens fairly and encourage people to pay promptly and regularly.  |
| 3. What is the intended outcome of this policy, procedure, strategy or practice?  | The main aim of the policy is to set out how the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction sections, interact with their customers and their agents in the recovery of identified and classified Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Benefit Overpayments and to set out a clear Debt Recovery strategy.<br><br>The Aims of the Procedure are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all staff involved in the recovery of overpayments operate a fair and consistent process;</li> <li>• Set out a clear debt recovery strategy;</li> <li>• Demonstrate the Council's commitment to the delivery of quality services to our customers;</li> <li>• Minimise losses to the Council and the DWP from overpayments.</li> </ul> |
| 4. Please list any existing documents which have been used to inform this Equality Impact Assessment.                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery Policy.</li> <li>• Report to Customer Services DMT 23 January 2017 – Update to the Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery and Debt collection Procedure</li> </ul>  |

## Stage one: Rapid Impact Assessment

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| <p>5. Has any consultation, involvement or research with protected characteristic groups informed this assessment? If yes please give details.</p>   | No  |
| <p>6. Please give details of council officer involvement in this assessment.<br/>(e.g. names of officers consulted, dates of meetings etc)</p>   | Judy Orr, Head of Customer and Support Services<br>Fergus Walker, Revenues and Benefits Manager |
| <p>7. Is there a need to collect further evidence or to involve or consult protected characteristic groups on the impact of the proposed policy?<br/><br/>(Example: if the impact on an individual or group is not known what will you do to gather the information needed and when will you do this?)</p> | No  |

# Stage one: Rapid Impact Assessment

## Part 2: Protected Characteristics

Which protected characteristics will be positively or negatively affected by this policy, procedure or strategy?

NB Please place an X in the box which best describes the "overall" impact. It is possible for an assessment to identify that a positive policy can have some negative impacts and visa versa. When this is the case please identify both positive and negative impacts in Part 3 of this form.

If the impact on a protected characteristic group is not known please state how you will gather evidence of any potential negative impacts in box Part 1 section 7 above.

If there is a negative impact against a protected characteristic then a full EqIA (Stage 2) should be completed.

| Protected Characteristic       | Positively | Negatively | No Impact | Not Known |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Age                            |            |            | X         |           |
| Disability                     |            |            | X         |           |
| Ethnicity                      |            |            | X         |           |
| Gender                         |            |            | X         |           |
| Gender reassignment            |            |            | X         |           |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership |            |            | X         |           |
| Pregnancy & Maternity          |            |            | X         |           |
| Religion                       |            |            | X         |           |
| Sexual Orientation             |            |            | X         |           |

## Stage one: Rapid Impact Assessment

### Part 3: Impacts/Monitoring

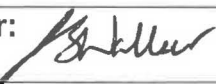

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| <p>1. Have any positive impacts been identified?</p> <p>(We must ensure at this stage that we are not achieving equality for one strand of equality at the expense of another)</p>  | No  |
| <p>2. Have any negative impacts been identified?</p> <p>(Based on direct knowledge, published research, community involvement, customer feedback etc.)</p>  | No  |
| <p>3. What action is proposed to overcome any negative impacts?</p> <p>(e.g. involving community groups in the development or delivery of the policy or practice, providing information in community languages etc.)</p>  | N/A |
| <p>4. Is there a justification for continuing with this policy even if it cannot be amended or changed to end or reduce inequality without compromising its intended outcome?</p> <p>(If the policy that shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination you must stop and seek legal advice)</p> | N/A |
| <p>5. Has a 'Full' Equality Impact Assessment been recommended?</p> <p>(If the policy is a major one or is likely to have a major impact on protected characteristics communities a Full Equality Impact Assessment may be required).</p>   | No  |

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| <p><b>6. How will the policy be monitored?</b></p> <p>(How will you know it is doing what it is intended to do? e.g. data collection, customer survey etc.)</p> | <p>Recovery performance will be monitored. The Overpayment Officer will provide reports to management on a monthly basis detailing the larger debt, recovery action taken and recording any receipts against the debt.</p> <p>The Council aims to comply wherever possible with guidance issued by the Department of Work and Pensions and as such undertakes to review this procedure regularly in order to incorporate and update for best practice as and when necessary.</p> |
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**Part 4: Contact Information**

**Name of Department:** Customer and Support Services

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| <b>Manager Responsible</b>                        |
| <b>Name:</b> Fergus Walker                        |
| <b>Designation:</b> Revenues and Benefits Manager |
| <b>Telephone:</b> 01586 555237                    |
| <b>Email:</b> fergus.walker@argyll-bute.gov.uk    |

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|---|----------------------|
| <b>Signature Lead Officer:</b>                 | <b>Date:</b> 13/2/07 |
| <b>Signature of Director/Head of Service:</b>  | <b>Date:</b> 14/2/11 |
| <b>Name of Director/Head of Service:</b> JUDY ORR   |                      |
| <b>Date of Next Policy Review:</b>  |                      |

