

**Hart District Council
BVPI Benefits
Satisfaction Survey 2006/7
*Working Draft***



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Summary

Background

This report represents the findings of a postal survey conducted by Marketing Means on behalf of Hart District Council about user's views on aspects of the service received from the benefits service. The survey was primarily conducted for the collection of 'User Satisfaction Performance Indicators' as all authorities are required to do every three years. The previous survey was conducted in 2003/4.

The survey followed strict guidelines laid down by the Audit Commission¹. Key guidelines included: using the questionnaire supplied, sending it by post to a sample of individuals who pursued a new or amended Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit claim and are notified of a decision on that claim within the two sampling windows and taking steps to get as many responses back as possible, including sending at least 2 reminders. This ensures that results across the country are comparable.

The survey was sent out to 933 claimants in the District between August 2006 and February 2007 in two phases. A total of 492 (53%) completed surveys were received back. This means that Hart District has not achieved the required outcome of 625 responses (which was not possible due to the low number of claims within the sample period), but did achieve the desired outcome of a 50% response rate. The anonymous data was then submitted to the Audit Commission (*Sections 1.2 and 1.5 of this report*).

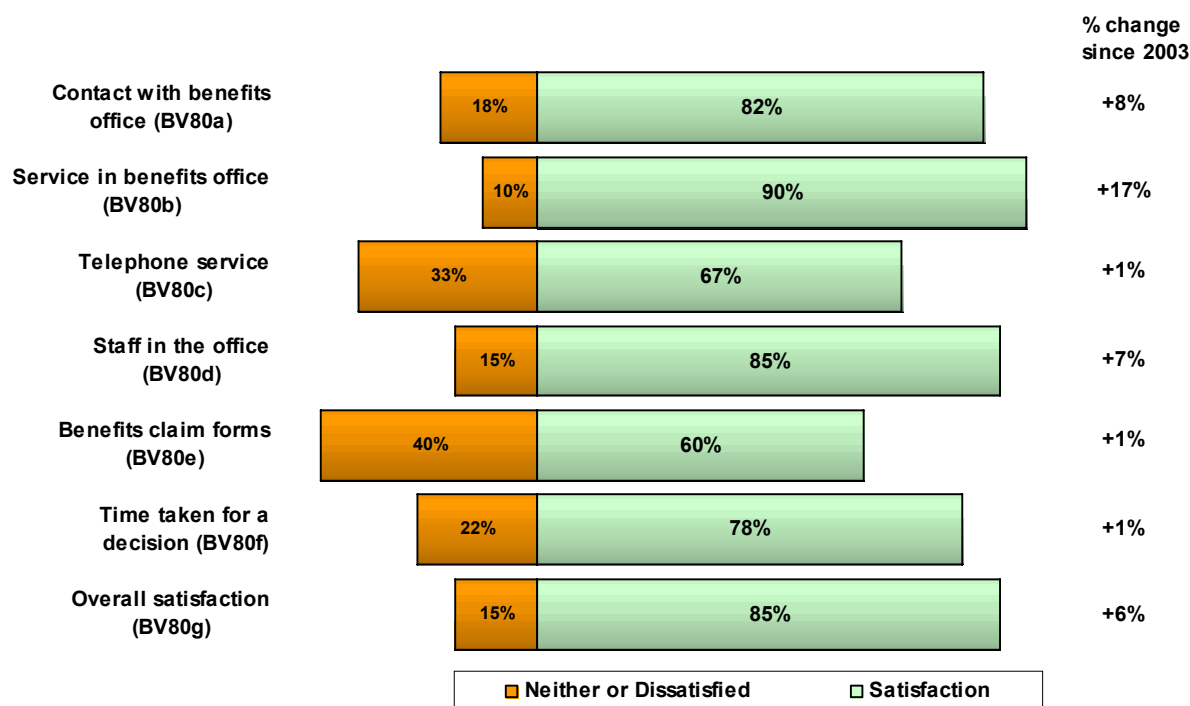
Results: Performance Indicators ('BV's)

The results of the Best Value Performance Indicators obtained from the Benefits Survey are shown below, along with the changes compared to the 2003 survey results (*Sections 3.1 to 3.7 of this report*).

The 'satisfaction' questions are asked on a scale of 'very satisfied' / 'fairly satisfied' / 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' / 'fairly dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied'. The performance indicators are calculated by adding the percentage of respondents who are 'Very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' and this is termed 'satisfaction'.

When comparing the survey to the previous year, a difference of 3% or 4% is ignored, as this may be due to normal variations expected between surveys ('sampling error') rather than an actual change. This is known as the 'confidence interval' and should be taken into account when looking at the percentage changes shown in the chart below.

**Summary of 'satisfaction' for BVPI General User satisfaction 2006
(with comparisons to 2003)**



Source: Marketing Means 2007

¹ Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2006 'Guidance for Understanding the Best Value Surveys' February 2006 DCLG / Audit Commission

Analysis and context

Overall satisfaction has increased by 6%. As this is outside the confidence interval of +/-4%, it should be considered a statistically significant improvement in satisfaction with the overall service. As there will be no national comparisons available until summer 2007, it is not possible to see how this compares to all other authorities and general trends.

All the individual service indicators have seen increases in overall satisfaction. Three of the indicators (BV80 a, b & g) have increased beyond the limits of the confidence interval, meaning that they are statistically significant. The other three (BV80 c, e & f) have increased within the confidence interval, so cannot be considered statistically significant, although the general trend is up.

As has been noted on all previous benefits surveys, those respondents who were unsuccessful in their benefits claim were much more likely to be dissatisfied with all aspects of the service and staff. There were, however, only 5% of respondents to the survey who were unsuccessful. It is not possible to say, however, whether there was a lower response rate amongst those who were unsuccessful or not.

The aspects of the service that appear to be in most need of improvement are the claim form and the time it takes for a decision to be made.