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Our ref

Contact Matthew Moore

7 January 2019

Dear Neil

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council - Certification of claims and returns - annual report 2017/18

Public Sector Audit Appointments requires its external auditors to prepare an annual report on the claims and returns certified for each audited body. This letter is our annual report for the certification work we have undertaken for 2017/18.

In 2017/18 we carried out certification work on only one claim or return, the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim. The certified value of the claim was £68.13 million, and we completed our work and certified the claim on 30 November 2018.

Matters arising

Our certification work on Housing Subsidy Benefit claim included:

- agreeing standard rates, such as for allowances and benefit incomes, to the DWP Circular communicating the value of each rate for the year;
- sample testing of benefit claims to confirm that the entitlement had been correctly calculated and was supported by appropriate evidence;
- undertaking an analytical review of the claim form considering year-on-year variances and key ratios;
- confirming that the subsidy claim had been prepared using the correct benefits system version; and
- completing testing in relation to modified schemes payments, uncashed cheques and verifying the accurate completion of the claim form.

Our work identified the following issues:

- An error in Non-HRA Rent Rebates in which the classification of an overpayment was incorrect. A population of similar cases was identified and a further two errors were identified. These errors were corrected in the final certified claim;
- An error in Non-HRA Rent Rebates in which the Child Tax Credit was entered incorrectly. A population of similar cases was identified and no further errors were identified. This error was corrected in the final certified claim;
- An error in the Rent Allowances in which an incorrect tariff income value was included in the calculation leading to an underpayment of benefit. 40+ additional testing was carried out and a further error was identified leading to an overpayment. This issue was reported to the DWP within the claim qualification letter and an extrapolation of the error was reported.
- An error was identified in Rent Rebates in which the paternity pay value was incorrectly entered. A population of similar cases was identified and an additional error was identified. These errors were corrected in the final certified claim;
- An error was identified in Rent Rebates in which Guaranteed Credit had been awarded incorrectly and this led to an overpayment. This case had already been identified in a Housing Benefit Matching Service sample, therefore this population was tested. A further 10 errors were identified. These errors were corrected in the final certified claim.

The final claim was reduced by £11,928 from the initial claim submitted 26.4.18.

We have made no recommendations to the Authority to improve its claims completion process. There were no recommendations made last year and there are no further matters to report to you regarding our certification work.

Certification work fees

Public Sector Audit Appointments set an indicative fee for our certification work in 2017/18 of £15,236. Our actual fee was the same as the indicative fee, and this compares to the 2016/17 fee for this claim of £22,118.

Yours sincerely



Clare Partridge
Engagement Lead

This report is addressed to the Council and has been prepared for the sole use of the Council. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. We draw your attention to the Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies, which is available on Public Sector Audit Appointment's website (www.psaa.co.uk).

External auditors do not act as a substitute for the audited body's own responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Clare Partridge, the engagement lead to the Authority, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact the national lead partner for all of KPMG's work under our contract with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, Andrew Sayers, by email to andrew.sayers@kpmg.co.uk. After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access PSAA's complaints procedure by emailing generalenquiries@psaa.co.uk, by telephoning 020 7072 7445 or by writing to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, 3rd Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.