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David Cook
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Our ref 1314/KBC/CGRL

19/01/2015

Dear David

Certification of claims and returns - annual report 2013/14

The Audit Commission requires its external auditors to prepare an annual report on the claims and returns it certifies for each client. This letter is our annual report for the certification work we have undertaken for 2013/14.

In 2013/14 we carried out certification work on the following claims/returns:

Claim/return	Certified value (£)
BEN01 – Housing Benefit subsidy claim	25,664,356
CFB06 – Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts	1,639,052
Total	27,303,408

Matters arising

Our certification work did not identify any issues or errors with the CFB06 return. However, we issued a qualified certificate for the Housing Benefit (HB) claim due to an error identified in an individual case in how the claimant's capital had been assessed. Whilst we issued a qualified certificate we have not raised any additional recommendations in the current year, but have debriefed the benefits team of our findings.

In our 2012/13 Certification Annual Report we raised 2 recommendations relating to errors in the recording of non-dependent status and transposition errors in recording claimant capital. Of these, for both we are satisfied that the Council has improved its arrangements and has addressed the recommendations. Full details are included in Appendix 1.

Certification work fees

The Audit Commission set an indicative fee for our certification work in 2013/14 of £15,517. Our actual fee was the same as the indicative fee, and this compares to the 2012/13 fee for these claims of £19,985.

The details are set out in the table below.

Claim	2013/14 Final fee (£)	2012/13 Final fee (£)
BEN01 – Housing Benefit subsidy claim	14,539	17,335
CFB06 – Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts	978	1,050
LA01 – National Non Domestic Rates	N/A	1,600
Total	15,517	19,985

Yours sincerely



Jon Gorrie
Director

Appendix 1 – Follow up of 2012/13 Certification of Claims and Returns Recommendations

Number	Prior year recommendation	Priority	Status as at January 2015	Management comments
1	<p>The Authority should record more detailed notes on the benefits system to evidence review of dependent status when changes in the household occur.</p> <p>The Authority should provide training to the benefits team to reiterate the correct procedures for recording dependent status.</p>	2	<p>The training officer delivered training to the benefits team during the year. This includes a general update, but also training over specific areas such as those identified as outcomes from the audit.</p>	Agreed and actioned.
2	<p>The Authority should reiterate to the benefits team the importance of recording details correctly for each claim, and that human error can result in incorrect benefit payments to claimants.</p>	2	<p>This is reiterated to the benefits team on a regular basis through recurring team meetings, and should continue to occur.</p>	Agreed and actioned.

This report is addressed to the Authority and has been prepared for the sole use of the Authority. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. The Audit Commission has issued a document entitled Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies. This summarises where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from the audited body. We draw your attention to this document.

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.

If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Jonathan Gorrie, who is the engagement leader to the Authority (telephone 0121 232 3645, e-mail jonathan.gorrie@kpmg.co.uk who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact Trevor Rees (telephone 0161 236 4000, e-mail trevor.rees@kpmg.co.uk) who is the national contact partner for all of KPMG's work with the Audit Commission. After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access the Audit Commission's complaints procedure. Put your complaint in writing to the Complaints Unit Manager, Audit Commission, 3rd Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF or by email to complaints@audit-commission.gsi.gov.uk. Their telephone number is 0303 444 8330.