



# Grant Thornton

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Dear Kathy

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## **Certification work for Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council for year ended 31 March 2017**

We are required to certify the Housing Benefit subsidy claim submitted by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council ('the Council'). This certification typically takes place six to nine months after the claim period and represents a final but important part of the process to confirm the Council's entitlement to funding.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 gave the Secretary of State power to transfer Audit Commission responsibilities to other bodies. Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) took on the transitional responsibilities for HB COUNT issued by the Audit Commission in February 2015.

We have certified the Housing Benefit subsidy claim for the financial year 2016/17 relating to subsidy claimed of £84.5 million. Further details are set out in Appendix A.

We identified a small number of minor issues from our certification work which we wish to highlight for your attention:

- we identified five cases in our extended testing of non-HRA rent rebate where the incorrect LHA rate had been used. These all related to the same property. The Council reviewed all instances where this property had been used and amended the subsidy claim accordingly.
- we identified one case in our extended testing of non-HRA rent rebate where the CAPITA system had not correctly split the benefit paid between up to the LHA rate and above the LHA rate. The Council reviewed all instances where this occurred and amended the subsidy claim accordingly.
- we identified one case in our extended testing of non-HRA rent rebate testing where the LHA rate had been incorrectly input. This resulted in an underclaim of subsidy of £0.40 which extrapolated over the whole of the population would result in an underclaim of £3.
- we identified one case in our initial testing of rent allowance where the claim had been reassessed except for three days in the middle of the claim period. This resulted in an overpayment of £2.74. This was a CAPITA system problem for which Council staff were unable to offer an explanation.
- we identified three cases in our extended testing of overpayments of rent allowance where the overpayment had been misclassified as eligible error rather than LA error. Our sample identified an error of £29.73 which if extrapolated over the whole of the population would result in an overpayment of £3,783.

The extrapolated financial impact on the claim, which we have reported to the DWP, was insignificant to the total subsidy receivable.

As a result of the errors identified, the claim was amended and qualified, and we reported our findings to the DWP. The DWP may require the Council to undertake further work or provide assurances on the errors we have identified.

The indicative fee for 2016/17 for the Council was based on the final 2014/15 certification fees, reflecting the amount of work required by the auditor to certify the Housing Benefit subsidy claim that year. The indicative scale fee set by PSAA for the Council for 2016/17 was £24,323. This is set out in more detail in Appendix B.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grant Thornton UK LLP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grant Thornton UK LLP

**Appendix A - Details of claims and returns certified for 2016/17**

<b>Claim or return</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Amended?</b>	<b>Amendment value</b>	<b>Qualified?</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Housing benefits subsidy claim	£84,510,125	Yes	£7,129	Yes/No	See above

**Appendix B: Fees for 2016/17 certification work**

<b>Claim or return</b>	<b>2014/15 fee (£)</b>	<b>2016/17 indicative fee (£)</b>	<b>2016/17 actual fee (£)</b>	<b>Variance (£)</b>
Housing benefits subsidy claim (BEN01)	£32,430	£24,323	£24,323	£0
Total	£32,430	£24,323	£24,323	£0