
Effective management

We operate governance arrangements designed for effective management and control. We provide clear accountability and help ensure that public funds are safeguarded, in the pursuit of our business objectives. A sound system of governance makes certain that we:

- respond appropriately to significant risks to our operational objectives;
- comply with all relevant laws, regulations, policies and accepted recommendations of external scrutiny;
- ensure individuals are accountable for their responsibilities; and
- maintain a high quality in our internal and external reporting.

The DWP's Risk Assurance Division reports independently to the Audit Committee, providing opinions on the adequacy of our governance and risk management. To date, the majority of audit work has focused on customer service and operational risks, in line with the risk profile of the agency. Risk Assurance Division provides an overall assessment of our performance risk and control framework in-year. For 2008/09 the overall assessment remains at Reasonable Assurance and achieved more 'strong' assurance opinions than its two predecessor agencies in 2007/08 and no 'weak' assurance assessments.³

Risk management

Risk management is integrated within all of our key business processes. Our Executive Management Team is committed to actively promoting an open and honest risk culture and believes risk management is the business of everyone, as it is the shared understanding and communication of risk information that leads to informed decision making. Our Business Plan identified the organisation's strategy and key deliverables, together with the associated resource implications and assumptions. Our risk-based processes and business practices have allowed us to be flexible and responsive in delivering key business objectives.

Security of customer data

We aim to keep our customer data secure and what customers say to us confidential. The Data Protection Act and Social Security legislation places specific requirements on the handling and use of personal and other official information. Details of protected personal data related incidents can be found in the Management commentary on page 38.

³ Assurance Categories Strong – No action required, Reasonable – Moderate remedial action is required, Limited – Remedial action is required, Weak – Urgent and significant remedial action is required.