

Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit recipients: by Country, Region and Local Authority, March 2012

July 2012

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

Background

People who are on a low income or receiving certain benefits can apply for financial help to pay their rent (Housing Benefit - HB) and Council Tax (Council Tax Benefit - CTB). Both HB and CTB are administered by Local Authorities.

Further information on HB and CTB is available at:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport/On_a_low_income/index.htm

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit statistics published by DWP are based on the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE) data source. SHBE is a monthly electronic scan of claimant level data direct from Local Authority computer systems. It has been designed to provide sufficient information for all current and future statistical purposes and is now the single source of HB & CTB data.

The Department regularly publishes a range of statistical information on HB & CTB recipients at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=hbctb>. This ad hoc publication provides some more detailed breakdowns of these tables, in particular, more breakdowns by region and local authority area.

Results

The associated spreadsheet provides a more detailed breakdown of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, as at March 2012, as follows:

Table 1 - Housing Benefit recipients and average weekly amounts by Local Authority, Region and Country, by tenure.

Table 2 - Council Tax Benefit recipients and average weekly amounts by Local Authority, Region and Country.

Table 3 - Council Tax Benefit recipients and average weekly amounts by Council Tax Band, Region and Country.

Table 4 - Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit recipients as a percentage of all households, by Local Authority, Region and Country.

Housing benefit recipients by tenure

In summary, of the 5.0 million recipients of Housing Benefit, 3.4 million (67% of the total) are in the social rented sector and 1.6 million (33% of the total) are in the private rented sector. Scotland tends to have a higher percentage of HB recipients in the social rented sector (80%), and the South West Region the lowest (58%).

The overall average Housing Benefit award is £87.04 per week, and is generally lower for social rented sector tenants (£77.20) than for private rented sector tenants (£107.24). Many of the London boroughs show a higher than average gap between HB awards to private and social tenants. At local authority level the average weekly amount ranges from £55.20 in Moray to £188.13 in Westminster.

Council Tax Benefit average weekly amounts

For Council Tax Benefit recipients, the overall average award was £15.70 per week. There is less variation in the Council Tax Benefit amounts by local authority, which range between £9.26 in Wandsworth to £23.59 in Richmond upon Thames.

Council Tax Band

SHBE collects information on Council Tax Band. This information has been quality assured, and found to be informative, but not of National Statistics standard. We have therefore produced a table showing Council Tax Benefit recipients analysed by Council Tax Band. This shows us that 45% of recipients are in Band A. When we look at the Regions we can see that the Region with the highest percentage of recipients in Band A (83% of the total) is the North East with the lowest number (6% of the total) in London. The highest percentage of benefit recipients in London (34% of the total) are in Band C.

As expected, the average amount increases with Council Tax Band from £13.60 for those in Band A to £39.04 for those in Band H plus.

Percentage of households receiving HB or CTB

Table 4 provides estimates of the percentage of households which receive HB or CTB. They are estimates as the definitions of households being compared differ. Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit recipients are based on benefit unit and not household and as such may include more than one person at the same address who claim independently.

In Great Britain as a whole, an estimated 18.9% of all households receive Housing Benefit. Among the regions, London has the highest percentage (25.5% of households) with the lowest (14.7% of households) being in the South East Region. Among local authority areas, Hackney has the highest percentage of households receiving HB (42.3%) and East Dorset the lowest at 5.6%.

For Council Tax Benefit the overall figure is 22.3% of households receiving this benefit, with the highest percentage (28.6% of households) in the North East Region and the lowest (16.7% of households) in the South East Region. Among local authority areas, Knowsley has the highest percentage of households receiving CTB (39.5%) and the City of London the lowest at 6.1%.

Alan Deighton (alan.deighton@dwp.qsi.gov.uk)

Department for Work and Pensions

July 2012