

Housing Benefit Circular

Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA

HB A10/2014

ADJUDICATION AND OPERATIONS CIRCULAR

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|------------------------|---|
| WHO SHOULD READ | All Housing Benefit staff |
| ACTION | For information |
| SUBJECT | Discretionary Housing Payment Guidance 2014 |

Guidance Manual

The information in this circular does not affect the content of the HB Guidance Manual.

Queries

- **extra copies of this circular/copies of previous circulars** can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-for-local-authorities-circulars-2014>
- about the
 - **technical content of this circular**, contact
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Discretionary Housing Payment Guidance 2014

Introduction

1. To take account of the increased funding toward Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) in 2014 -15 and on-going feedback from local authorities (LA) and stakeholders throughout the year, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidance issued in April 2013 has been revised. Although much of the guidance remains relevant, changes were needed to take account of the increased funding and its intended purpose. The guidance includes an expanded good practice guide that offers advice on how DHPs can be used to support certain groups of people and is available on GOV.UK.
2. The guidance is intended to act as an aid to assist in implementing and managing local DHP schemes. However, LAs have overall responsibility for how DHPs are administered and paid in their area, in line with legislation.

Background

3. As announced in the Autumn Statement 2013, the government contribution towards DHPs has been significantly increased to help LAs support people affected by some of the key welfare reforms, namely:
 - the benefit cap
 - Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (RSRS) in the social rented sector
 - Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reforms.
4. This will give LAs the confidence to make long term awards to support those with ongoing needs.
5. The funding has been allocated using a method that, as far as possible, targets resources according to need. Housing benefit (HB) circular [S1/2014](#) contains details of LA allocations and expenditure limits.

Reporting measures

6. Reporting measures are continuing in 2014/15 to monitor how DHPs are supporting people affected by the welfare reforms. This year, the reporting measures will be based on the amount of DHP paid to a claimant. Further details of this change and examples are included in the guidance.
7. This means from 1 April 2014 LAs should record if a successful DHP claimant has been affected by one of the following:
 - the benefit cap
 - RSRS in social rented sector
 - LHA reforms

- combination of reforms
 - no impact
8. In addition, you should record the broad or main outcome expected from that award:
- to help secure and move to alternative accommodation (e.g. rent deposit)
 - to help with short-term rental costs until the claimant is able to secure and move to alternative accommodation
 - to help with short-term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment
 - to help with on-going rental costs for disabled person in adapted accommodation
 - to help with on-going rental costs for foster carer
 - to help with short term rental costs for any other reason.
9. It will be a matter for individual LAs how they record and collate the information, however, a template spreadsheet is provided at Appendix A that you may find helpful.
10. Please note that DWP does not require details of individual claims. The information should be collated and will be gathered using a return form that will be issued to LAs twice yearly. We will issue a HB circular highlighting the deadlines for submission, initially in October 2014. An example of the return form is attached at Appendix B.