

# Housing Benefit

## General Information Bulletin

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

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**HB G2/2016 (Revised)**

**22 February 2016**

<b>Contact</b>	Queries about the <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>technical content of this bulletin</b>, contact details are given at the end of each article</li><li>• distribution of this bulletin, contact <a href="mailto:housing.correspondenceandpqs@dwp.gsi.gov.uk">housing.correspondenceandpqs@dwp.gsi.gov.uk</a></li></ul>
<b>Who should read</b>	All Housing Benefit (HB) staff
<b>Action</b>	Item 1 'Benefit cap changes – Single Point of Contact nominations to receive scans' has been revised please destroy the original issue of G2/2016

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## Benefit cap changes - Single Point of Contact nominations to receive scans

1. We have started to formally engage with local authority (LA) Chief Executive Officers and Revenues and Benefits managers regarding the forthcoming changes to the benefit cap and the next steps.
2. In late April 2016 we will be sending a scan with details of Housing Benefit (HB) customers likely to be impacted by the changes to the benefit cap levels in autumn 2016. Due to the number of records on the scans they will be sent using PGP data encryption software to a PGP key holder within the LA.
3. In order to receive the scan LAs will need to identify a relevant person who is a PGP key holder and supply the following:
  - your LA Name
  - PGP key holder's name, email address, telephone number and office address
  - attach a copy of their **PGP Public Key file** (typically ends in 'asc').
4. Where the PGP key holder is not the person who will deal with the scan, LAs will also have to identify a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) to receive the scan from the PGP key holder. LAs will need to supply the SPoC's name, email address, telephone number and office address.
5. If we don't receive these details then we will be unable to send the scans. If an LA doesn't have a PGP key holder you will need to contact the project (details below).
6. The scan information will be helpful to ensure that you are in a position to support claimants affected by the benefit cap. There will be a further scan sent in late summer 2016 by the same method.
7. PGP key holder details, PGP Public Key file document and SPoC details need to be sent to [la\\_spoc.bencap@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:la_spoc.bencap@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) by **11 March 2016**.
8. If you have any queries regarding this article please email the Benefit Cap Changes Project at [caroline.a.mcdermott@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.a.mcdermott@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## Reminder: Small profits threshold for self-employed people

9. This information was first published in bulletin [HB G4/2015](#) issued in April 2015 but is being reissued as a reminder. On 6 April 2015 Class 2 National Insurance contributions became an annual liability to be determined retrospectively based on the person's tax self-assessment. From the same date the 'small earnings exception' for self-employed people was replaced by the 'small profits threshold'.
10. A self-employed person whose earnings are below the 'small profits threshold' is not liable to pay Class 2 contributions. HM Revenue and Customs also stopped issuing exception certificates to self-employed people whose earnings

are below the 'small profits threshold' from April 2015. For more information about this change please see bulletin [HB G4/2015](#).

11. If you have any questions about this article you can email [housing.benefitenquiries@dpw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housing.benefitenquiries@dpw.gsi.gov.uk)

### **'DLA is ending' information campaign**

12. Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is ending for people who were born after 8 April 1948 and are aged 16 or over.

13. Information is now available that aims to:

- raise awareness that DLA is ending
- make sure claimants know what they need to do next
- ensure claimants can access the information they need to make a decision about claiming Personal Independent Payment (PIP) before their DLA ends.

14. Information is available through:

- online search advertising (when people search for key words relating to PIP and DLA ending)
- digital advertising on Facebook
- a 'DLA is ending' advert shown via screens in GP surgeries and hospitals (running until 4 March)
- a leaflet for community organisations.

### **'DLA is ending' leaflet**

15. An eight page leaflet titled 'DLA is ending' is available that gives DLA claimants more information. It also includes information for claimants about deciding whether to claim PIP.

16. The [leaflet](#) is available to view and download in PDF from GOV.UK or via the [PIP Stakeholder Toolkit](#) which provides useful information to individuals and organisations that support PIP and DLA claimants.

### **Order copies of this leaflet**

17. Leaflets can be ordered by organisations that help and support DLA claimants. This leaflet is free of charge and available in packs of 25. You can order up to a maximum of 10 packs. Your order will be delivered in 5 to 7 days.

18. To order leaflets email: [ion-pass@xerox.com](mailto:ion-pass@xerox.com). Please put 'DLA/PIP leaflet order' in the email subject box and provide the following details:

- recipient's name
- organisation
- delivery address
- a contact telephone number

- number of English leaflet packs required (code DLA/PIP 01)
- number of Welsh leaflet packs required (code DLA/PIP 01W)

19. If you have any questions about the content of this article please email [claire.howard@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:claire.howard@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## Further changes to DWP postal addresses

20. DWP is continuing to modernise how it receives and processes post resulting in new postal addresses. A number of businesses are currently changing their addresses:

- Employment and Support Allowance
- Social Fund
- Compensation Recovery Unit.

21. More about the changes to DWP post handling and a full list of office addresses so far can be found [here](#).

## Printing and completing DWP forms from GOV.UK

22. The vast majority of post DWP receives is now scanned on receipt. Photocopies of forms printed from GOV.UK can cause issues when viewing the scanned images which may result in delays for claimants/customers.

23. Therefore, it is important when completing a DWP form printed from GOV.UK to complete the original printed version and not a photocopy.

24. You can find more details on DWP's post opening and scanning service [here](#).

## New 'Housing Benefit Review Good Practice Guide'

25. Following observations by DWPs' Performance Development Team consultants during LA site visits, a 'Housing Benefit Review Good Practice Guide' has been developed to help further improve the process across all LAs. Many of these good practices are already undertaken and so this guidance is to encourage conformity across all LAs.

26. The [guide](#) will be particularly helpful to LA managers and staff who are the HBR contacts for the annual reviews.

## Secondment opportunities

27. DWPs' Housing Policy Division (HPD) has an on-going programme of bringing HB experts from LAs in to work alongside policy teams on secondment. HPD are looking to recruit a number of LA employees onto the programme over the coming months. Please see Annex 1 for the latest secondment opportunities.

## HB/CTB decisions by the Upper Tribunal

28. Decision Making and Appeals Leeds is aware of the following HB cases that have been decided by the Upper Tribunal:

- CH/4024/14 and CH/572/15: Spare Room Subsidy. Claimant appeal dismissed. Nelson followed.
- CH/4624/14: Spare Room Subsidy. Shared care. Claimant appeal dismissed.
- CH/5402/14, CH/87/15, CH/1187/15 and CH/1946/14: Spare Room Subsidy. Remit. Nelson followed.
- CH/1780/15: Membership of the household. Remitted for further findings of fact.
- CH/2729/14 and CH/1047/15: Spare Room Subsidy. Claimant appeal dismissed. Nelson followed.
- CSH/294/15: Decision without reasons.
- CH/65/15 and CH/88/15: Spare Room Subsidy. Shared care. LA decision restored. Nelson followed.
- CH/2727/2015 HB overpayment. Remitted. Natural justice – claimant wished to attend oral hearing and tribunal was aware she couldn't as she had moved 160 miles away. Tribunal should have adjourned and relocated hearing. There are tribunal rooms local to the claimant's new address.
- CH/3136/2014: Person From Abroad (PFA). Upper Tribunal Judge substituted their own decision reflecting effective date of change of circumstances from being a PFA (HBR 10) to ceasing to be a PFA.
- CH/5411/2014: HB/Council Tax Benefit overpayment. Upper Tribunal Judge substituted their own decision revising benefit decision on which overpayment based. Tribunal failed to make clear findings of fact for date self-employment commenced.
- CH/3446/14: Deprivation of capital. Insufficient consideration given to significant operative purpose.
- CH/3598/14: Spare Room Subsidy. Remit. Nelson followed.

- CH/2957/2015: Decision without reasons. Remitted. Concerns validity of notice of suspension letter.
- CH/3174/2015: HB overpayment. Remitted. Error of law - claimant reasonably expected to realise she was being overpaid, before entitlement notification letter on which the overpayment decision relied was issued.

29. Decisions of the Upper Tribunal are published on their website which can be found here:

<http://www.administrativeappeals.tribunals.gov.uk/Decisions/decisions.htm>

30. If you have any queries about cases before the Upper Tribunal Judges or courts, you can contact us by email at [fldmma.customersupportservices@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fldmma.customersupportservices@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or fax on 0113 2324841.

## Statutory Instruments

31. The following Statutory Instruments (SIs) have been laid:

- 2016 No.33 (C.3), The Welfare Reform Act 2012 (Commencement No. 26 and Transitional and Transitory Provisions and Commencement No. 22, 23 and 24 and Transitional and Transitory Provisions (Modification)) Order 2016 coming into force from 27 January 2016
- 2016 No.39, The Pensions Act 2014 (Pension Sharing on Divorce etc.) (Transitional Provision) Order 2016 coming into force 6 April 2016
- 2016 No.46 (C.2), The Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 1) Order 2016, coming into force from 17 February 2016
- 2016 No.82, The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling and Compensation Cap) Order 2016, coming into force from 14 March 2016
- 2016 No.157, The Social Security (Reciprocal Agreement) (Isle of Man) Order 2016, coming into force 6 April 2016
- 2016 No.158, The Social Security (Reciprocal Agreements) Order 2016, coming into force 6 April 2016
- 2016 No.160, The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Modification) Order 2016, coming into force 3 March 2016

32. Copies of SIs can now be downloaded from the DWP's own website

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/specialist-guides/law-volumes/the-law->

[relating-to-social-security/](#) and the website of the Office of Publication Sector Information <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/stat.htm>.

## What's new on the web

33. The following items can be found on the website link shown

Document Type	Subject	Link
<b>G1/2016</b>	<p>Documents and supporting evidence for electronic claims</p> <p>Risk Based Verification - Reminder Clarification on setting CIS ATLAS interest indicators</p> <p>Changes to State Pension age increases</p> <p>Planned review of our HB pages on GOV.UK</p> <p>Cases with the Upper Tribunal What's new on the web</p> <p>HB administration - Signposting to good practice and other guidance</p>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-g12016">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-g12016</a>
<b>HB Direct issue 164</b>	<p>Caseload Management Information FERIS 2</p> <p>State Pension Online - changing channels, changing lives Carer's Allowance and the benefit cap</p> <p>New State Pension online Planned review of HB pages - Your views welcomed</p>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497439/hb-direct-february-2016.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497439/hb-direct-february-2016.pdf</a>
<b>A1/2016</b>	Managing capital cases where Payment Protection	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497439/hb-direct-february-2016.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497439/hb-direct-february-2016.pdf</a>

	Insurance may be included	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492960/a1-2016.pdf">hment_data/file/492960/a1-2016.pdf</a>
<b>A2/2016</b>	Extension of Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme 2016/17/Maintenance Fund.	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500253/a2-2016.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500253/a2-2016.pdf</a>
<b>S1/2016</b>	Details of the government contribution towards Discretionary Housing Payments for local authorities in 2016/17	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497986/s1-2016.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497986/s1-2016.pdf</a>
<b>S2/2016</b>	Extension of Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme 2016/17/Maintenance Fund	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500261/s2-2016.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500261/s2-2016.pdf</a>



### Housing Policy Division's secondment opportunity

HPD's role is to provide policy advice to Ministers on support for housing costs within the benefit system. The Department is currently undertaking a huge programme of welfare reform. Knowledge of housing support benefits such as HB and/or Universal Credit is desirable but not essential. The priority is that personal requirements are met and the candidate has the ability and desire to learn new things at pace. These secondment opportunities will in turn provide an opportunity to gain an insight and experience of policy development and working in central government.

Successful candidates can expect to learn about how Ministers and officials develop policy options, how the consultation process works and how agreement is reached across government. The successful candidates will be expected to use and develop a wide range of skills to analyse, develop, compare explain and defend policy options. In addition there will be work relating to liaison with stakeholders, particularly LAs.

#### Personal requirements

- Good understanding of HB or experience of working with and explaining procedures and regulations.
- Good drafting and communication skills
- Ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with LAs and other stakeholders
- Ability to work with people at different levels in the organisation and to work as part of a team to achieve results

The posts are being offered for 6 months initially but this will be reviewed at the end of the period and could be extended for up to a maximum of two years. The posts are full time and based in Caxton House, Westminster or Quarry House in Leeds. We do not want to deter candidates from outside of London applying and will therefore consider some remote working where this fits in with the business need. In addition we are able to offer some help with travel expenses if additional costs are incurred.

We would like the successful candidates to be able to start early in the new financial year. If you are interested in applying and are at S01/S02/PO1/PO2 level or equivalent, (roughly equates to civil service HEO grade) please:

- check with your LA that you can be released
- send your CV by email to [ronnie.haynes1@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ronnie.haynes1@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) by **2 March 2016**.

Interviews will be held during week commencing 14 March 2016.

If you would like to have a chat about this opportunity you can contact Ronnie Haynes on 0207 449 5680.