

Housing Benefit Direct issue 136 April 2013



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Editorial

Welcome to another HB Direct. This is indeed an historic month as it sees the launch of the Benefit Cap, Local Welfare Provision, Personal Independence Payment, Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy and, of course Universal Credit. In addition we say goodbye to Council Tax Benefit and welcome localised council tax reduction. This is a period of unprecedented change with local authorities in the vanguard of most of this. Once again I thank you for your input. I'm sure your planning and commitment will hold us in good stead as we aim to introduce all of this change while continuing to deliver an essential service to the millions of customers that depend on us.

We've introduced a communications toolkit to help provide all the information you need to understand and to present details of the reforms to others. I hope you find it a valuable tool but please feel free to let us have ideas for improvement, details are given below.

There have been changes in personnel too. We'll shortly be welcoming Howard Shiplee to lead Universal Credit. Simon Tse joined us on 2 April to become Director of Contracted Customer Services Directorate. Simon's arrival means that Julia Sweeney will resume her role as Deputy Director of Housing Delivery Division. Which means that this will be my last Editorial. I won't be leaving the Housing arena and look forward to working with you to help make the reforms a success.

It's important that we get early feedback on how things are operating now we are actually implementing the changes. Please don't hesitate to let me have your views on what is going well or not so well.

Very best wishes.

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[Distribution enquiries](#)

DWP Huddle update

The Local Authority Data Sharing (LADS) Programme can confirm that **Huddle**, the Cloud Based Collaboration tool used by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), now has registered users from over 95% of all local authorities (LAs). The LA Data Share (All LAs) workspace is now the sole communication channel for incident awareness and the provision of guidance and awareness materials. The LA Support Team (LA-ST) now only use Huddle to communicate national issues with the data sharing infrastructure, including:

- Automated Transfer to LA Systems (ATLAS);
- e-transfer (LAID/LACI forms);
- Electronic Transfer Document (ETD); and
- Customer Information System (CIS) Access.

Previously LAs would have received these updates via e-mail.

The LA Data Share (All LAs) workspace contains discussions, and has the ability to start new discussions regarding DWP data sharing, to assist LAs in their administration of Housing Benefit (HB) and localised Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes.

The Huddle files page contains all relevant and up to date documentation relating to the DWP data sharing initiatives, such as the:

- revised ATLAS Awareness Pack;
- LA-ST incident forms;
- copies of all letters issued to Benefit & Revenue managers;
- other guidance.

We can also confirm that the individual LA Information Technology (IT) Supplier workspaces, discussed on Huddle, are also due to be available in April following discussions with those suppliers on content.

If you wish to see any other detail on Huddle that could assist your LA then please use the discussions page to provide your suggestions.

On a lighter note, congratulations to Andrew Waugh, of Carlisle LA, who is the lucky recipient of a Huddle T-shirt and pen due to being the 1000th registered LA user. [Please log into Huddle for more details.](#)

If you have not got access and wish to be registered please send you invitation request to: la-sst.hdd@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Howard Shiplee to lead Universal Credit

The DWP announced on 27 March that Howard Shiplee, currently an Executive Director at the Laing O'Rourke Group, will join the Department in mid-May to lead the Universal Credit programme when David Pitchford returns to his role at the major projects authority.

Howard Shiplee Press Release

Pathfinder for Universal Credit

We have released final operational details on the Pathfinder for Universal Credit, confirming the reform will start early in some areas of Greater Manchester and Cheshire from the end of April.

Pathfinder Press Release

IRRV Benefits Conference – Come and see us

We are pleased to let you know that we will once again be attending the Institute of Revenue Ratings and Valuation (IRRV) Benefits Conference and Exhibition at Keele University, 16 - 17 April 2013.

Main speakers representing DWP will be Andrew Parfitt, Head of Housing Policy Division; Reforming Welfare, Jeremy Groombridge, Director of External Relations; Universal Credit, Progress on the Delivery Programme, and David Gaskill; Single Fraud Investigation Service.

In addition to the main speakers, Universal Credit will be running two workshops on 17 April 2013 on the Local Support Service Framework.

On our stand throughout the conference, you will find staff from Housing Delivery Division along with colleagues from Fraud and Error, Personal Independence Payment, Benefit Cap and Social Fund Reform, covering areas such as:

- Universal Credit
- Benefit Cap
- Housing Benefit Reform
- Single Fraud Investigation Service
- Personal Independence Payment
- ATLAS
- Local Welfare Provision.

We look forward to seeing you at the conference.

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DWP reform communications toolkit

DWP has produced a toolkit of communications materials to help you tell the DWP Reform Story. It explains the context behind reforms and gives an overview of the changes being delivered over the next few years. It provides you with the headline information you need across all our policy areas, including Housing Benefit, localisation of Council Tax Reduction and the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy. To support this top line information, DWP has produced more detailed resources, including [a toolkit of support on Housing Benefit size criteria restrictions](#), the [Personal Independence toolkit](#) and the [Universal Credit Partner toolkit](#).

The reform communications toolkit will be continuously updated to ensure it is always accurate. A new version will be uploaded on the DWP website every month. There are four parts to the toolkit, allowing you to select the amount and type of information most appropriate to your audience:

- A reform narrative setting out DWP's vision;
- A brief overview of the joined up reform story. This high level document lists the changes the reforms will bring, and is intended for use at conferences and events;
- A presentation version of the above, with less text and detailed speaker's notes, is provided to be used when information is being delivered face to face;
- A more detailed breakdown going through the DWP reforms in greater depth, based on a segmented design that allows you to remove or combine topics in different ways to suit your audience.

This resource is now available on the [DWP website](#).

For more information, or to submit comments and feedback on the toolkit, please email the [DWP stakeholder team](#).