

Housing Benefit

General Information Bulletin

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

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HB G11/2014

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Contact	Queries about the <ul style="list-style-type: none">• technical content of this bulletin, contact details are given at the end of each article• distribution of this bulletin, contact housing.correspondenceandpqs@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
Who should read	All Housing Benefit staff
Action	For information

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Fraud and error in the benefit system

1. The latest fraud and error national statistics (2013/14 estimates) were published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 6 November 2014 and are available on GOV.UK.
2. Overall the figures are quite flat and show that globally, overpayments have remained at the same level as 2012/13 at 2.1% of benefit expenditure. The estimated monetary value, however, has decreased from £3.5 billion to £3.4 billion. This is due to an overall decrease in total benefit expenditure from £167 billion to £164 billion.
3. In Housing Benefit (HB), fraud and error overpayments increased to 6.0% from 5.1% in 2012/13, although this is fairly comparable with the benefits administered by DWP. Full details are included in the report but the headlines are:
 - **HB fraud and error** has risen to its highest ever recorded level and is up from 5.1%, £1,220 million, in 2012/13 to 6.0%, £1,450 million, in 2013/14
 - both fraud and claimant error are at their highest recorded level with **fraud** up from 1.3%, £320 million, in 2012/13 to 1.8%, £430 million, in 2013/14 and **claimant error** up from 3.3%, £780 million, to 3.7%, £900 million
 - **Official error** remains the same at 0.5%, £120 million in 2013/14.

Publication of new Universal Credit products

Universal Credit and families

4. From autumn 2014 Universal Credit can be claimed by some families in certain areas of the United Kingdom. Take a look at some [new products](#) that help explain how this will work.

Publication of the Social Landlord Support Pack

5. On 13 November 2014 we published the Universal Credit [Social Landlord Support Pack](#). This pack provides information to support social landlords and local authorities (LAs) that are considering undertaking some preparation for the direct payment of housing costs under Universal Credit.
6. It is based on what we have tested and learned from the pilots and the rollout of Universal Credit to date. We have consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including social landlords, Local Government Associations, Department for Communities & Local Government and representatives from the housing trade bodies.
7. In addition to the information in the pack there is also a DWP [central contact](#) should social landlords wish to have a further discussion on their plans for preparation.

Performance Measurement case review

8. We have consulted with Practitioners Operational Group members, to seek out ways to improve LA engagement with the HB review process, in particular to improve the usability of the LA agreement of potential errors.
9. We are pleased to say, that we have identified some sensible actions that we can take to improve the process and to ease some of the frustrations that you are currently experiencing. In particular:
 - we will no longer use the term LA representative, the role & responsibilities will remain the same, however, this role will be referred to as the Error Control Officer (ECO). This will align with the role across all DWP benefits that we review.

With effect from January 2015,

- we will strengthen and secure the decision notifications sent to and from LAs with the introduction of a receipting process
 - we will provide you with a calculation of the error value and an explanation of why we consider the HB award to have a potential error. This change will make agreeing/disputing errors quicker and easier for all
 - we will continue to issue a reminder 5 working days from the date we made you aware of the error and we will now also copy this to the Revenues and Benefits Manager
 - with the aim of improving the feedback loop on final outcomes we will improve the decision notice to provide final outcomes on all disputed cases
 - we will provide a summary report following the completion of the LA review which is intended to improve the visibility of HB review outcomes.
10. We hope that you will find these developments welcome and we will continue to seek ways to improve the process and help you to get the most out of the review. We will keep you in touch with progress.

Contact details for clerical Personal Independence Payment (PIP) cases

11. Circular [HB A11/2014](#), published in June 2014, identified designated contacts for clerical PIP cases as being those nominated for the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP).
12. Upon its commencement AFIP used the LA Benefit Cap contact list, however because AFIP is not a DWP benefit, we are asking LAs to use and maintain

their nominated Benefit Cap contact as the single point of contact for PIP HB communications. The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) will maintain their own AFIP contact list separately.

13. We have also received a number of enquiries in relation to the table of contacts provided for the Benefit Delivery Centres in circular HB A11/2014, (provided again at Annex 1). Some LAs have not been able to determine which of the contacts was the most appropriate, at Annex 2 of this bulletin we have provided a table of postcodes that will enable each LA to identify which of the Benefit Delivery Centres should be used for each case based on a claimants' postcode.

Reporting changes to the Benefit Cap contacts List

14. Changes to contact details for the Benefit Cap should be reported to Sharon Green on the Benefit Cap Contact Team – sharon.green4@dwp.gsi.gov.uk who will then notify PIP of the change.

15. If there are changes to AFIP contact details LAs should notify the AFIP team directly using – afip.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

16. Please use the information provided in the Annexes to identify the correct Benefit Delivery Centre to contact for the case/postcode involved.

Statutory Instruments

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

- 2014 No.2735, The Jobseeker's Allowance (Habitual Residence) Amendment Regulations 2014, came into force 9 November 2014
- 2014 No.2887, The Universal Credit (Digital Service) Amendment Regulations 2014, coming into force 26 November 2014
- 2014 No. 2888, The Universal Credit and Miscellaneous Amendments (No.2) Regulations 2014, coming into force 26 November 2014
- 2014 No.2904, The Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme (Levy) Regulations 2014, coming into force 28 November 2014

Copies of SIs can now be downloaded from 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>

Cases with the Upper Tribunal

HB/CTB decisions by the Upper Tribunal

18. Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) Leeds is aware of the following cases that have been decided by the Upper Tribunal:

- CH/82/2014: First-tier Tribunal wrong to decide Articles 8 and 14 were infringed by the relevant regulations and Article 6 not applicable. Very little said about this and case remitted
- CH/328/2014: Claimant appeal allowed. Change of address notified to LA by DWP. Claimant disputed. LA left claimant to try and sort out and obtain details from DWP helpline – a task that the LA were better suited to carry out, and more likely to succeed at, having direct access to the relevant benefit office
- CH/4417/13: Capital. Insufficient reasons to support valuation of claimant's interest in property
- CH/887/14: Tribunal correct to conclude that attendance at a day centre and support group did not amount to full-time study for the purposes of applying a non-dependant deduction
- CH/1991/14: Tribunal incorrectly awarded service charges in respect of a long tenancy
- CSH/525/2014: Claimant appeal. Dismissed. Upper Tribunal Judge confirms First-tier Tribunal explanation of their decision confirming refusal to backdate (insufficient good cause) is correct in law
- CH/884/2014: Claimant appeal. Dismissed. HB/CTB supersession and overpayment. Living Together As Married Couple – no error of law in tribunal's findings of fact.
- CSH/456/14: Spare room subsidy. Secretary of State's appeal upheld. Court of Appeal's decision in MA followed.

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

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

HB cases awaiting decision by the Upper Tribunal

19. DMA Leeds is aware of the following HB cases that are awaiting decision by the Upper Tribunal:

- CSH/626/2014 – spare bedroom subsidy

- CH/2606/2014 – eligibility of a communal water charge

Thank you to those authorities that have let us know about cases they are appealing. Please notify us of cases at the point that the application for leave to appeal is made to the Upper Tribunal office, or the appeal is lodged following grant of leave by a First Tier Tribunal Judge. Please let us know if a case reference (CH/.. or CSH/..) has been allocated.

Queries

20. If you have any queries about cases before the Upper Tribunal Judges or courts, please contact us by:

Email: fldmdma.customersupportservices@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

or fax on 0113 2324841

What's new on the web

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

Document Type	Subject	Link
HB G10/2014	<p>Increase to waiting days for new claims to Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance</p> <p>An update on Universal Credit and an introduction to Universal Support – delivered locally</p> <p>Update on the rollout of Personal Independence Payment</p> <p>Migrants Access to Benefits – feedback and best practice</p> <p>LA information on GOV.UK</p> <p>Statutory Instruments</p> <p>HB/CTB decisions by the Upper Tribunal</p> <p>What's new on the web</p>	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-g102014</p>

	As a separate attachment Migrants Access to Benefits – feedback and best practice	
HB U5/2014	Judicial Review: R (on the application of Cotton & Others) and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2014] EWHC 3437 (Admin)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-u52014-judicial-review-r-on-the-application-of-cotton-and-others-and-the-secretary-of-state-for-work-and-pensions
HB Direct Issue 154 November	Newsletter	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-direct-november-2014-issue-154

Regional Benefit Delivery Centres – Nominated contacts

Benefit Centre:	Name/Contact Email	Telephone
Blackpool BC Unit 1 (Motability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debbie Franklin mailto:Franklin Debbie DCS WARBRECK HOUSE T3 CSD Karen Tomkins mailto:Tomkins Karen DCS 	01253 337525 01253 339507
Blackpool BC Unit 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simon Harrison mailto:Harrison Simon DCS Sarah Sumner mailto:SARAH.SUMNER@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK 	01253 337078 01253 330189
Blackpool BC Unit 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donna Fleetwood mailto:DONNA.FLEETWOOD@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK Yvonne Spencer mailto:Spencer Yvonne DCS 	01253 337955 01253 331024
Blackpool BC Unit 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debbie Duffy mailto:Duffy Debbie DCS Iain Ellis mailto:Ellis Iain DCS 	01253 339649 01253 331858
Blackpool BC Unit 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alison Roberts mailto:Roberts Alison DCS PIP REASSESSMENT WORKFLOW TEAM Lisa Snaith Snaith Lisa DCS PIP REASSESSMENT WORKFLOW TEAM 	01253 339650 01253 331661
Bootle DBC/ Clerical claim team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laura Taylor mailto:Laura Taylor (DCS BOOTLE DBC) Andy Foy mailto:Foy Andrew DWP BOOTLE BC 	0151 9346240 0151 9346247
Bristol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valerie Cobbin mailto:VALERIE.COBBIN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK David Resuggan mailto:DAVID.RESUGGAN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK 	0117 9718365

Benefit Centre:	Name/Contact Email	Telephone
		0117 9718389
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christine Reilly mailto:CHRISTINE.REILLY@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK • Elizabeth Lamont mailto:Lamont Elizabeth DCS GLASGOW DBC 	0141 2411202 0141 2411013
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Prosser mailto:Prosser Stuart DCS WALES DBC • Gerwyn Robinson mailto:Robinson Gerwyn DCS WALES DBC 	029 20586732 029 20586120
Yorkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allison Gaunt mailto:Gaunt Alison DCS IT PROJECT DIRECTORATE • Mark Bailey mailto:Bailey Mark DCS LAWNSWOOD 	0113 2324721 0113 2309012

Postcode Mapping

Please use the following table to identify the correct Benefit Delivery Centre to contact for the case/postcode involved.

Post Code Area	Benefit Centre
AB	Scotland
AL	Wales
B	Wales
BA	Bristol
BB	Yorkshire
BD	Yorkshire
BH	Bristol
BL	Bootle
BN	Bristol
BR	Bristol
BS	Bristol
CA	Bootle
CB	Scotland
CF	Wales
CH (Except 5, 6, 7 & 8)	Bootle
CH5,CH6,CH7,CH8	Wales
CM	Scotland
CO	Scotland
CR	Wales
CT	Scotland
CV	Bristol
CW	Bootle
DA	Scotland
DD	Scotland
DE	Yorkshire
DG	Scotland
DH	Bootle
DL1 - DL5 & DL12 - DL17	Bootle
DL6 - DL11	Yorkshire
DN	Yorkshire
DT	Bristol
DY	Bootle
E	Wales
EC	Wales
EH	Scotland
EN (except EN9)	Wales

EN9	Scotland
EX	Bristol
FK	Scotland
FY	Bootle
G	Scotland
GL	Bristol
GU	Bristol
HA	Wales
HD	Yorkshire
HG	Yorkshire
HP (<i>except HP1 - HP4</i>)	Bristol
HP1 - HP4	Wales
HR	Wales
HS	Scotland
HU	Yorkshire
HX	Yorkshire
IG (<i>except IG9</i>)	Wales
IG9	Scotland
IP	Scotland
IV	Scotland
KA	Scotland
KT	Bristol
KW	Scotland
KY	Scotland
L	Bootle
LA1	Bootle
LA2-1 to LA2-6 & LA2-9	Bootle
LA2-7	Yorkshire
LA2-8	Yorkshire
LA3 to LA5	Bootle
LA6-1	Bootle
LA6-2 & LA6-3	Yorkshire
LA6-4 to LA6-9	Bootle
LA7 to LA23	Bootle
LD	Wales
LE	Yorkshire
LL	Wales
LN	Yorkshire
LS	Yorkshire
LU (<i>except LU2</i>)	Bristol
LU2	Wales
M	Bootle
ME	Scotland
MK	Bristol

ML	Scotland
N	Wales
NE	Bootle
NG	Yorkshire
NN	Bristol
NP	Wales
NR	Yorkshire
NW	Wales
OL	Yorkshire
OX	Bristol
PA	Scotland
PE	Yorkshire
PH	Scotland
PL	Bristol
PO	Bristol
PR	Bootle
RG	Bristol
RH	Bristol
RM1 to RM14	Wales
RM15 to RM20	Scotland
S	Yorkshire
SA	Wales
SE	Wales
SG1 to SG14 (<i>except SG5</i>)	Wales
SG5 & SG15 to SG19	Bristol
SK	Yorkshire
SL	Bristol
SM	Wales
SN	Bristol
SO	Bristol
SP	Bristol
SR	Bootle
SS	Scotland
ST	Bootle
SW	Wales
SY1 to SY13 & SY99	Bootle
SY14 to SY25	Wales
TA	Bristol
TD	Scotland
TF	Bootle
TN	Bristol
TQ	Bristol
TR	Bristol
TS (<i>except TS9</i>)	Bootle

TS9	Yorkshire
TW	Bristol
UB	Wales
W	Wales
WA	Bootle
WC	Wales
WD	Wales
WF	Yorkshire
WN	Bootle
WR	Wales
WS	Bootle
WV	Bootle
YO	Yorkshire
ZE	Scotland