

Housing Benefit

General Information Bulletin

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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 (HB) staff
Action	For information

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2015/16 Housing Benefit administration subsidy arrangements

1. Subsidy Circulars [HB S6/2014](#), [S7/2014](#) and [S8/2014](#) announced a **provisional** 2015/16 distribution of Housing Benefit (HB) administration subsidy to Scottish, Welsh and English local authorities (LAs) respectively, stating that the figures were subject to any announcement in the December Autumn Statement which may affect the overall level of funding
2. Following the Autumn Statement it is confirmed that the figures notified in those circulars can now be treated as final.
3. If you have a query about the 2015/16 administration subsidy distribution, contact email: hbctb.subsidyqueries@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
4. If you have a query about the payment arrangements, please contact

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Service Level Agreement between Debt Management and LAs amendment

5. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Debt Management and LAs was attached to bulletin [HB G7/2014](#). Please note that the contact details listed in Appendix 3 of this SLA have been changed to reflect a recent organisational change within the HB team at the Contact Centre in Porth.
6. If you have not already done so please could you forward a signed copy of the [SLA](#) to the named Debt Management contact to advise us of your agreement to the SLA.

Local Housing Allowance Targeted Affordability Funding for 2015/16

7. Arrangements have now been made for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Targeted Affordability Funding (TAF) for 2015/16.
8. In keeping with the arrangements for 2014/15, rates for 2015/16 will be set at either the 30th percentile of local rents, or the previous rate increased by 1%, whichever is the lower of the two. For those areas where rates have diverged the most from the 30th percentile of market rents, rates will be increased by 4% subject to the maximum LHA caps and the total amount of TAF available.
9. The TAF for 2015/16 is limited to £95 million and will also be used to maintain the TAF increases from 2014/15.
10. Amendments to the Rent Officers Order to take these arrangements forward, including a schedule of which Broad Rental Market Areas and rates will be targeted for the extra funding were laid and published on [GOV.UK](#) on 1 December 2014.

11. All the new LHA rates which will apply from April 2015 will be determined and published by Rent Officers on **30 January 2015**, together with the 30th percentiles of market rents.
12. If you have any queries, please contact:
housing.benefitenquiries@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme

13. Ministers have announced that more money will be made available to LAs through a Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme (FERIS) with a view to significantly reducing fraud and error during 2014/15, 2015/16 and beyond. The detailed scheme design is set out in circular [HB A17/2014](#) (Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme: Guidance for local authorities).
14. Following the issue of circular HB A17/2014 a number of LAs have asked for the information pack referred to within the circular. To clarify, each LA has received a personalised information letter which details their FERIS baseline and thresholds and potential payment amounts for FERIS and the start-up fund. Any other information was contained in the circular.
15. From 17 December we have slightly amended the **start-up application** form to ask for a breakdown of costs and key implementation dates, so please use the latest application forms which are available in Word format on [GOV.UK](#).

Universal Credit roll out

16. We are expanding Universal Credit in a safe and secure way. We have already demonstrated this with the successful launch of the Pathfinder in April 2013, which expanded to six further sites from October 2013, and then from June 2014 with the controlled expansion to single claimants and couples in the North West of England.
17. On Monday 15 December 2014 the roll out of Universal Credit in the North West of England completed as planned meaning that the new service is now available to new claimants who would otherwise have been eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) in nearly 100 jobcentres covering 45 LAs across Great Britain.
18. A list of the Jobcentre areas where Universal Credit is live is available on [GOV.UK](#).
19. As part of the North West of England expansion in November 2014, Universal Credit expanded to families in six jobcentres, providing parents with stronger incentives and support to get into work and earn more money.
20. We've already seen remarkable success, with Universal Credit claimants moving into work faster and staying in work longer.

21. In September 2014 the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced plans to roll out Universal Credit nationwide from February 2015 to new claims from single claimants who would otherwise have been eligible for JSA.
22. On 9 December 2014 we published a list of the LAs and jobcentres that will roll out Universal Credit in the first tranche of national expansion between February and April 2015.
23. The list is available on GOV.UK
24. When fully rolled out Universal Credit will provide the country with an economic benefit of £7 billion each year.

Universal Credit data sharing consultation

25. On 10 December 2014 we launched our consultation on the draft data sharing regulations for Universal Support.
26. This consultation asks for views on the draft regulations which amend the Social Security (Information-sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012. These allow information to be shared between DWP and local support providers, specifically LAs, Citizens Advice Bureaux, credit unions, social landlords and relevant registered charities.
27. The information shared will enable local support providers to identify Universal Credit claimants who need assistance, advice and support and to ensure that support is in place. This is intended to help agencies implement the Local Support Services Framework (published February 2013 and now being developed as Universal Support – delivered locally). The intention is that the proposed changes will come into force in February 2015 and will be implemented from March 2015.
28. We would be interested in views from any source and particularly welcome comments on the draft regulations from:
 - LAs
 - social landlords
 - charities
 - money advice providers
 - other third parties active in the provision of local support services
 - Universal Credit claimants

The consultation document is available on GOV.UK

29. More information on Universal Support is also available on GOV.UK

Good bye Huddle and welcome to Glass Cubes collaboration tool

30. In December's issue of HB Direct we let you know that our contract with Huddle was coming to an end on 6 December 2014.
31. The replacement system for our future collaboration needs is now 'Glass Cubes' and this went live on 8 December 2014.
32. Glass Cubes is user friendly with layout and approach similar to Huddle, so users should feel familiar with the style and look.
33. If you are not a current registered user of Glass Cubes but wish to gain access please contact LA-SST via e-mail (la-sst.hdd@dwg.gsi.gov.uk) and they will ensure new joining instructions are issued.

HB/CTB decisions by the Upper Tribunal

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

- CH/4775/2013: Claimant appeal. Remitted. HB/CTB overpayment – failure to disclose change of circumstances, self-employed to employee (director). Further evidence (relevant / non-relevant?) brought to tribunal but not recorded / retained; insufficient investigation of change of circumstances by both LA and tribunal; overpayment from date disclosure made non-recoverable, not a recoverable official error overpayment.
- CH/810/2014: LA appeal. Dismissed. HB overpayment – claimant failure to disclose non-dependant left household. LA opted for paper hearing – claimant had an oral hearing. Tribunal finding of fact claimant had made disclosure. LA applied for set aside – refused. No obvious discrepancies between claimant's evidence and LA's submission but at Upper Tribunal it was admitted LA had not included all relevant documents and had not admitted that the office where claimant made disclosure was a designated office.
- CSH/479/14: Membership of the household. Shared care of child. Remitted for further findings of fact

35. Decisions of the Upper Tribunal are published on their [website](#).

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

fldmdma.customersupportservices@dwg.gsi.gov.uk or

Fax – on: 0113 2324841

Statutory Instruments

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

- 2014 No.3053, The Maternity Allowance (Curtailment) Regulations 2014, coming into force 1 December 2014
- 2014 No.3054, The Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Adoption Pay (Curtailment) Regulations 2014, coming into force 1 December 2014
- 2014 No. 3067 (C.129), The Welfare Reform Act 2012 (Commencement No. 9, 11, 13 14, 16, 17 and 19 and Transitional and Transitory Provisions (Amendment)) Order 2014, made on 17 November 2014
- 2014 No.3078, The Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) Order 2014, coming into force 1 January 2015
- 2014 No.3094 (C.133), The Welfare Reform Act 2012 (Commencement No. 20 and Transitional and Transitory Provisions and Commencement No. 9 and Transitional and Transitory Provisions (Amendment)) Order 2014 made on 21 November 2014
- 2014 No.3117, The Jobseeker's Allowance (18-21 Work Skills Pilot Scheme) Regulations 2014, made on 24 November 2014
- 2014 No.3126, The Rent Officers (Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Functions) (Local Housing Allowance Amendments) Order 2014, coming into force 8 January 2015
2014 No.3138, The Public Service Pensions (Record Keeping and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014, coming into force 1 April 2015
- 2014 No.3213, The Pensions Act 2014 (Consequential Amendments) (Units of Additional Pension) Order 2014, coming into force 12 October 2015
- 2014 No.3232, The Child Poverty Act 2010 (Persistent Poverty Target) Regulations 2014, coming into force 31 December 2014
- 2014 No.3240, The Social Security Class 3A Contributions (Units of Additional Pension) Regulations 2014, coming into force 12 October 2015
- 2014 No.3270, The Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment (Amendment) Regulations 2014, coming into force 21 September 2015

38. 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>

What's new on the web

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

Document Type	Subject	Link
HB Direct issue 155 December	Newsletter	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-direct-december-2014-issue-155
HB G11/2014	<p>Fraud and Error in the benefit system</p> <p>Publication of new Universal Credit products</p> <p>Performance Measurement case review</p> <p>Contact details for clerical Personal Independence Payment (PIP) cases</p> <p>Statutory Instruments</p> <p>Cases with the Upper Tribunal</p> <p>What's new on the web</p> <p>Regional Benefit Delivery Centres – Nominated contacts</p> <p>Postcode Mapping</p>	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-g112014
HB A17/2014	Fraud and Error Incentive Reduction Scheme Payments in 2014/15	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-circular-a172014-fraud-and-error-reduction-incentive-scheme-guide-for-local-authorities
HB S6/2014	2015/16 HB administration subsidy arrangements for Scottish LAs	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-subsidy-circular-s62014-housing-benefit-administration-subsidy-arrangements-for-scottish-local-authorities-apr-2015-to-mar-2016
HB S7/2014	2015/16 HB administration	https://www.gov.uk/government/

	subsidy arrangements for Welsh LAs	publications/hb-subsidy-circular-s72014-housing-benefit-administration-subsidy-arrangements-for-welsh-local-authorities-apr-2015-to-mar-2016
HB S8/2014	2015/16 HB administration subsidy arrangements for English LAs	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-subsidy-circular-s82014-housing-benefit-administration-subsidy-arrangements-for-english-local-authorities-apr-2015-to-mar-2016
HB S9/2014	Payment of New Burdens relating to the Single Investigation Service for 2014/15	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-subsidy-circular-s92014-payment-of-new-burdens-relating-to-the-single-fraud-investigation-service-for-financial-year-201415
HB S10/2014	Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme Funding	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-subsidy-circular-s102014-fraud-and-error-reduction-incentive-scheme-funding
HB S11/2014	New burdens payment for Real Time Information Bulk Data Matching Initiative	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-subsidy-circular-s112014-real-time-information-bulk-data-matching-initiative-compensation-payments-for-local-authorities
HB U6/2014	Upper Tribunal decisions CSH/41/14 and CSH/42/14 (RSRS)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-u62014-first-tier-tribunal-cases-on-the-removal-of-the-spare-room-subsidy