

## Housing Benefit

### General Information Bulletin

Department for Work and Pensions, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Caxton House, Tothill Street,  
London SW1 9NA

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/housing-benefit/>

**HB G9/2013**

**9 September 2013**

<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>	For information

### Contents

	paragraph
Student Uprating 2013/14.....	1
HB higher permitted work disregard increase.....	4
Council Tax Reduction – DCI1 Process update.....	9
LA information on .GOV.UK.....	15
IRRV annual conference.....	22
Huddle LA IT workspace.....	27
Benefit cap official second statistics release.....	35
What’s New on the Web.....	40
Attached as separate documents	
DCI1 form.....	Appendix A
DCI1 form completion notes.....	Appendix B
List of links to HB information on .GOV.UK.....	Appendix C

### Crown Copyright 2013

Recipients may freely reproduce this bulletin.

## Student Uprating 2013/14

1. The rates for the travel grant disregard and the books and equipment disregard have been frozen since 2010 and are again this year. For the academic year 2013/14 the disregard rates will remain at £303.00 in respect of travel and £390.00 in respect of books and equipment.
2. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) has updated its information on the financial support available to students for each year of their courses. Details can be found at:
  - <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/loans-and-grants>, and
  - <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-for-existing-students>
3. For further information on Student Uprating please contact:  
[housing.benefitenquiries@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housing.benefitenquiries@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## HB higher permitted work disregard increase

4. The higher permitted work disregard is currently £99.50 a week and is set by means of a cross-reference within the appropriate HB schedules to the regulations which set out the equivalent upper earnings limit in Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). The upper earnings limit is set by reference to the hourly National Minimum Wage which is increasing from £6.19 to £6.31 from 1 October 2013.
5. To allow customers to take full advantage of the increase and continue to work for up to 16 hours a week, the upper permitted work earnings limit in IB, SDA and ESA will increase from £99.50 to £101 a week from 1 October 2013. This means that
  - for existing HB claims the higher permitted work disregard must be increased from £99.50 to £101 a week, effective from 7 October 2013
  - for all new or repeat claims made, or treated as made, on or after 1 October 2013, the higher HB permitted work disregard will be £101 a week
6. The lower permitted work disregard remains at £20.
7. Guidance on the HB permitted work disregards is in the HB Guidance Manual, starting at BW2.141 (working age customers) or BP2.141 (Pension Credit age customers).
8. For further information on permitted work disregard increase please contact:  
[housing.benefitenquiries@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housing.benefitenquiries@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## Council Tax Reduction scheme – DCI1 process update

9. In HB bulletin G7/2013 we included an article concerning the requirement for an LA customer to hold a fully verified National Insurance Number (NINo) in order for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) to be paid, this article is to update you on the position for LA customers requiring a NINo to apply for CTR in Wales and Scotland as well as England.
10. For the CTR schemes operated in England and Wales, there **is** a legislative requirement for a fully verified NINo before CTR can be paid. There is **no** requirement for a NINo for those applying for CTR in Scotland.
11. If the CTR customer is living in England or Wales, does not have a NINo or has a NINo that is not verified and requires upgrading, a DCI1 form must be completed and forwarded to the appropriate NINo Centre for action to be taken to allocate/upgrade a NINo.
12. In all cases where a customer is applying for HB, a fully verified NINo must be held. Where the customer does not have a NINo or holds a not verified NINo, a DCI1 form must be completed as per current procedures.
13. We have also made changes to the new DCI1 form which is attached as a separate form at Appendix A; please can you use this with immediate effect. We have also provided at Appendix B a copy of the completion notes to use.
14. Any queries, please contact

[ninoexpertdomain.pointofcontact@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ninoexpertdomain.pointofcontact@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## LA information on .GOV.UK

15. In the August issue of HB Direct we let you know that we would be looking at all of the material we had on our LA HB pages as we had to move much of our web based information to .GOV.UK.
16. The majority of the pages that are still required have now migrated successfully to .GOV.UK with the remaining material being migrated over the next week. Some of the information we held on our HB pages was either not suitable, for example Q&A or lists of contacts, or not sufficiently up to date to be migrated so this has been saved in the National Archive, you'll also find a full snap shot of the LA pages as they were. The link to the national Archive is at the end of this item.
17. Any links that you have saved as favourites or bookmarked for the current pages should still work as automatic redirects have been put in place. Attached to this bulletin at Appendix C is a list of series links for you to use to access all of the information we now have on .GOV.UK.

18. The .GOV.UK site displays information in a different way to that you are used to so you will find that we no longer have all of our HB information in one section just for LAs. By providing you with a list of the links that you need for the most frequently accessed information you will be able to create new bookmarks making it easier for you to find the information you are looking for.

19. Some of you may have used the RSS feed on the DWP site but this functionality is not available on .GOV.UK so you will either need to use the search functionality or create new Bookmarks to access the pages you need on .GOV.UK.

20. Link to the National Archive where you will find all of the information that used to be on the LA pages on the DWP site

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107093842/http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/housing-benefit/>

21. If you are having difficulty finding the information that was previously available using the list of links provided please contact us at

[housing.correspondenceandpqs@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housing.correspondenceandpqs@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## **IRRV annual conference**

22. We will once again be attending the IRRV Annual Conference and Exhibition in Telford, 02 and 03 October 2013.

23. Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform will be giving the key note address, and an official from DWP will be speaking on rolling out Local Support Services for Universal Credit.

24. In addition to the main speakers, we will be running workshops on sharing best practice in supporting claimants: early lessons from implementation of the benefit cap, and data sharing.

25. Throughout the conference you will find staff from Housing Delivery Division along with colleagues from Fraud and Error, Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Benefit Cap and the LA Data Sharing programme, on stand number 27, covering areas such as:

- HB welfare reforms
- Universal Credit
- Benefit cap
- Single Fraud Investigation Service
- Personal Independence Payment
- Data Sharing

- Valuation Office Agency

26. We look forward to seeing you at the conference.

## **Huddle LA information technology workspaces**

27. We have now launched the local authority (LA) information technology (IT) supplier workspaces on Huddle. These are to be used in conjunction with the existing [Huddle LA Data Share \(All LAs\) workspace](#) which is being used to highlight ongoing incidents, issues and best practice relating to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data sharing initiatives, including updates for Data Transport Appliances (DTAs), Electronic Transfer of Data (ETD) notifications, LA Input Documents and Claim Information (LAID/LACI) e-transfers and Automated Transfer to LA Systems (ATLAS) notifications.

28. Any existing Huddle users should now find they have access to the Civica, Capita, Northgate and Northgate Orbis workspaces where they can ask questions, raise issues or discuss best practice about their IT system.

29. A version of the ATLAS Batch Processing matrix has been made available on your LA IT suppliers Huddle workspace. It provides details of which ATLAS notifications LAs have stated they can automate, reducing the amount of manual intervention required to administer customer changes notified by DWP and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Please view and comment on the detail provided using Huddle.

30. We must remind you that incidents still need to be raised using the correct existing processes and not using Huddle. This applies to incidents raised to both, the LA Support Team (LA-ST) or your IT supplier as appropriate.

31. Keep an eye on Huddle for any updates. If you have not yet registered and need access to Huddle please contact LA-ST, providing details of your LA IT supplier, to allow us to register you on the correct LA IT supplier workspace.

## **Huddle award nomination**

32. We have been nominated for the London and Home Counties One Service Network Innovation Award for the implementation of Huddle. They were interested to read about the work to successfully utilise secure cloud based collaboration with external users.

33. Thank you for your continued support in improving communications between DWP and LAs, we will continue to provide updates in future communications and on Huddle.

34. For further information please contact

[glen.skinner@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:glen.skinner@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## Benefit cap official second statistics release

35. Official Statistics relating to the benefit cap have been released and the latest update was published on Thursday 5 September 2013.

36. The statistics relate to the four LAs who implemented the cap from 15 April 2013; Bromley, Croydon, Enfield and Haringey and show the cumulative number of households capped to 31 July 2013. These figures are broken down by cap banding, number of children and household type.

37. This is the last release of pre-national implementation statistics. In future, statistics for the four phased area LAs will be published as part of the “National Implementation Benefit Cap” statistics. Future releases over the next quarter have been planned for the first Thursday of each month starting Thursday 3 October 2013.

38. In addition, a set of statistics has been published relating to national Jobcentre Plus activity regarding claimants who have been identified as potentially impacted by the benefit cap. The latest statistics include new cumulative totals for Great Britain up to 16 August 2013 and detail:

- the number of claimants identified as potentially affected by the benefit cap accepting employment support
- the number of claimants identified as potentially affected by the benefit cap participating in employment support
- the number of claimants identified as potentially affected by the benefit cap moving into work

39. The statistics can be accessed using the following link [Benefit Cap Statistics](#)

## What’s new on the web

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

Document Type	Subject	Link
<b>HB G8/2013</b>	implementation of Tranche 2 of the benefit cap further benefit cap implementation updates an update to HB G4/2013 HB and CTB cases awaiting decisions by the	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-g82013">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hb-bulletin-g82013</a>

	Upper Tribunal What's New on the Web	
<b>LA Consultation</b>	DWP/Local Authority Association Steering Group minutes August 2013	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-local-authority-associations-steering-group-minutes-august-2013">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-local-authority-associations-steering-group-minutes-august-2013</a>