

# Housing Benefit

## General Information Bulletin

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[www.gov.uk/dwp](http://www.gov.uk/dwp)

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**HB G6/2018**

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<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

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## Customer Information System Interest Automation

1. The setting and general maintenance of the Customer Information System (CIS) Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Reduction (CTR) interests, which is a key enabler to successful Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to local authority (LA) data sharing, is currently a manual process for LAs and is a process that is sometimes missed by LA operational staff. This results in interests' set/un-set incorrectly or set with incorrect LA ID codes and can cause operational problems for both DWP and LA staff as well as causing significant overpayments and subsequent impact on Fraud and Error prevention. It also has the potential to breach GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) where data is shared for non HB/CTR recipients.
2. DWPs' Housing Delivery Division's (HDDs) LA Data Sharing (LADS) Delivery Team has been looking at ways to improve this process and, following discussions with DWP Digital Architects and LA IT Suppliers, is pleased to announce that a new automated method of maintaining these interests has been identified. This involves LA HB/CTR systems having direct access to DWPs' CIS using new and improved software capabilities.
3. We have obtained cost and delivery estimates from all suppliers and have secured the required funding to commence work on this exciting new project. We have authorised all LA IT suppliers to commence design and development activities and are aiming to introduce the new service from autumn this year.
4. Once the new process is live, LA operational staff will no longer be required to access CIS to set and un-set interests, instead your HB/CTR IT systems will automatically undertake this process at the point claims are awarded and terminated.
5. We will keep you updated with progress and may also approach you to seek volunteers to help during the testing phase.
6. Full instructions will be provided in due course as we approach go-live, however, the project will require support from each LA IT department to deploy security certificates and undertake connectivity testing between LA and DWP systems.
7. Therefore, we would be grateful if each LA could provide a named contact within your internal IT department as soon as possible to [lads.deliveryteam@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:lads.deliveryteam@dwpgsi.gov.uk). Your email should include your LA name, and the contact's e-mail address and telephone number. The subject line of the email will be pre-populated.

## Pension Strategy Computer System uprating automation

8. DWP are responsible for sharing data with LAs on an annual basis for benefits hosted on DWPs' Pension Strategy Computer System (PSCS), for example, the uprating of State Retirement Pension (SRP).
9. However, in previous years, attempts to automate the process, in other words provided via the Automated Transfer of LA Systems, has failed. The reason for this failure was the inability of one of the key systems/components to process the unusually large file that is output after the uprating of all the PSCS benefits has taken place. Hence, to date, PSCS uprating data has never been provided to the LA via an automated process despite a number of attempts.
10. As the current process exists, the LAs apply a percentage increase to each PSCS benefit award claim when reviewing yearly HB and CTR claims. LAs estimate that £11.5 million per year could potentially be overpaid by LAs due to not receiving accurate PSCS uprating data from DWP. In addition, annual administration costs paid to LAs to action PSCS uprating manually are incurred.
11. LADS Delivery Team have been working with the DWP Digital Architects and LA IT Software Suppliers to identify a solution to automate this process.
12. We are pleased to announce an automated solution has been identified that will give the LAs access to accurate PSCS uprating data, not only during the annual uprating period but also whenever required for general HB/CTR claim maintenance. This involves LA HB/CTR systems having direct access to DWP CIS using new and improved software capabilities.
13. We have obtained costs and delivery estimates from all suppliers and have secured funding to commence work on this project. We have authorised all LA IT Software Suppliers to commence design and development activities and we are aiming to introduce the new service later this year in time for annual uprating.
14. Once the new service is live it will remove the need for LA operational staff to manually apply a percentage increase rather than the actual amount of the uprating when conducting the yearly review of customers HB and CTR claims.
15. Providing access to accurate PSCS uprating amounts to the LAs will also ensure overpayments do not occur.
16. We will continue to update you on the progress of this work through future articles in either our General Information Bulletins or HB Direct newsletters and may also approach you to seek volunteers to help during the testing phase.

## Further reminder: Housing Benefit Debt Recovery data returns

17. The Housing Benefit Debt Recovery (HBDR) data replaced the Housing Benefit Recoveries and Fraud in 2016.
18. The HBDR data and the SHBE (Single Housing Benefit Extract) form the two main data sources that are delivered by LAs to DWP. These returns provide the management information relating to HB which is then used by DWP analysts to produce the HBDR National Statistics.
19. DWP analysts use the HBDR data to fulfil their responsibilities around monitoring the performance of LAs and carrying out analysis to improve HB policy and/or analysing areas of particular interest or concern.
20. LAs must submit their HBDR returns to DWP within set deadlines as detailed within the guidance and HBDR Excel template which can be found on Glasscubes.
21. At present DWP are continuing to experience a high number of LAs who are either missing the deadline for submitting their data or have re-submitted revised data after the deadline has passed. This is creating additional pressures for DWP analysts whose role it is to produce the HBDR National Statistics. We would like to remind LAs that if:
  - their data is late it may be excluded from the HBDR National Statistics for that quarter
  - the data submitted is queried by DWP the revised data is required to be re-submitted by the LAs promptly.
22. If you have any queries or need a copy of the guidance referred to in this article please email [hbdr@dpw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hbdr@dpw.gsi.gov.uk)

## HB decisions by the Upper Tribunal

23. Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) Leeds is aware of the following HB cases that have been decided by the Upper Tribunal (UT):
  - CH/211/15: Removal of Spare Room Subsidy. LA decision restored. Nelson and Glasgow followed.
  - CH/2339/17 and CH/1977/17: Remitted. First-tier Tribunal (FtT) erred to consider whether claimant could reasonably have been expected to know they were being overpaid.
  - CH/3039/16: Set aside and remade by UT – FtT erred in concluding claimant had standing to mount an appeal.
  - CH/2060/17: Remit. Tribunal failed to make specific findings about regulation 9(1) (b).

24. Decisions of the UT are published on their website which can be found on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

25. If you have any queries about cases before the UT Judges or courts, please contact us by email at [fldmdma.customersupportservices@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fldmdma.customersupportservices@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or fax on 0113 232 4841.

## New Legislation

26. The following Statutory Instruments/Statutory Rules (SIs/SRs) have been laid:

- 2018 no. 121 The Personal Independence Payment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018, came into operation on 15 June 2018
- 2018 No. 676 The State Pension Credit (Additional Amount for Child or Qualifying Young Person) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, made on 4 June 2018

27. Copies of SIs/SRs can now be downloaded from [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)

## What's new on our HB pages on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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

Document Type	Subject	Link
<b>HB Direct issue 184</b>	Editorial  LA Subsidy workshops Housing Benefit subsidy enquiries  Real Time Information for HB overpayment recovery LA Welfare Steering Group and Practitioners' Operational Group  Publication of HB Speed of Processing statistics  General Data Protection Regulation went live on 25 May 2018	<a href="#">HBDirect184.pdf</a>

	Secondment Opportunities: DWP HDD	
<b>Circular HB A6/2018</b>	Housing Benefit operational information, performance support and engagement 2018/19	<a href="#">A6/2018.pdf</a>
<b>HB G5/2018</b>	<p>Local Authority Insight Survey</p> <p>Guidance Amendments to Adjudication Circulars</p> <p>HB Decisions by the Upper Tribunal</p> <p>New Legislation</p> <p>What's new on our HB pages on <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a></p>	<a href="#">G5/2018.pdf</a>