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D2 Publicity

About this chapter

- 2.00 This chapter
- gives guidance on publicity for the Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) Schemes
 - suggests other measures which might be used to publicise the Schemes generally and for special groups, and
 - explains what material is produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and how this can be obtained
- 2.01 Local Authorities (LAs) are required to satisfy certain statutory duties to publicise the schemes, but it is hoped that they will do more than the minimum required by statute.
- 2.02-2.29

Statutory requirements

- 2.30 Section 123(3) of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 gives LAs certain duties to make information available. LAs should
- take appropriate steps to make sure that people with a potential entitlement to HB and CTB are aware of the help available, and
 - make a copy of the statutory schemes, including all amendments issued, and any local variations available for inspection without charge at their main offices at reasonable hours

Meeting the statutory requirements

- 2.31 In carrying out their statutory duties, LAs are expected
- as a matter of routine, to draw attention to the HB Scheme when
 - implementing general rent increases for tenants, or
 - taking action on arrears owed by a person who has not already claimed a rebate, and
 - to inform people in privately rented accommodation of the possibility of help, and
 - to notify council tax payers of the existence of the CTB scheme
- 2.32 It is for LAs to determine how much to charge for providing a copy of the details of any local schemes but is expected that they should not charge more than the cost of producing the copy. LAs may, if they wish, provide free copies.

2.33-2.64

2.33 LAs are expected to make available a copy of this manual and any circulars issued by the DWP in connection with HB and CTB, unless the relevant circular is specifically noted that it may not be made available, eg certain fraud circulars.

2.34-2.59

Publicity material

Locally produced publicity material

2.60 LAs are encouraged to use their own material to complement that available nationally, particularly when there is a local variation to the statutory schemes or when a local need for additional publicity has been identified. Changes to the schemes should also be given adequate publicity.

2.61 LAs who produce their own leaflets should make sure these are kept up to date.

DWP produced publicity material

2.62 The DWP produces

- general leaflets (RRI and CTB1) and posters for LAs to use. The leaflets are available in some other languages and are intended simply to draw attention to the help available through HB and CTB. They do **not** provide detailed information about how claims are processed
- a more detailed combined technical guide (RR2). This guide is aimed at advice workers, the local social services agencies, other professionals and members of the public who want more information than leaflets can provide about the details of how benefit claims are assessed

Publicity material available on other benefits

2.63 LAs who have queries relating to publicity matters concerning other Social Security benefits should write to

Department for Work and Pensions
Press, Publicity and Marketing Services
4th Floor West
1 Trevelyan Square
Leeds LS1 6EB

2.64 LAs can obtain copies of publicity material on all Social Security Benefits by applying free of charge for membership of the DWP Publicity Register. Catalogue and order forms are supplied. Phone Number is 0845 602 4444 (local charge rate).

Making publicity material available

- 2.65 Since LAs are in regular contact with their own tenants and council tax payers it is relatively easy to make sure these people receive information about HB and CTB.
- 2.66 Similarly there should be no difficulty in getting information to tenants of housing associations, LAs should liaise with housing associations to ensure this. Other landlords may be prepared to co-operate in passing on information to their tenants.
- 2.67 In addition to using direct contacts with tenants and council tax payers to draw attention to HB and CTB, it is hoped that LAs will make information about the Schemes generally and widely available, for example by
- placing posters and other publicity material in any council office that is open to the public, not just in the offices of the housing and finance departments
 - supplying stocks of leaflets and claim forms to advice centres and keeping them informed about local arrangements and any major changes
 - informing pensioners' organisations, single parents' groups, mother and baby groups, trade unions, student bodies and other local organisations about HB and CTB, and
 - distributing leaflets and publicity material to doctors' surgeries, clinics, local libraries and community centres

2.68-2.89

Claimants may have entitlement to IS/JSA(IB)/Pension Credit

- 2.90 LAs are expected to make claimants who appear to have a potential entitlement to Income Support (IS), income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA(IB)) or Pension Credit aware of the help that may be available to them from DWP offices.

2.91-2.999