

## Housing Benefit Circular

Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA

# HB S6/2017

### SUBSIDY CIRCULAR

<b>WHO SHOULD READ</b>	All Housing Benefit staff
<b>ACTION</b>	For information
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Right Benefit Initiative 2017/18 Funding

### Guidance Manual

The information in this circular does not affect the content of the HB Guidance Manual.

### Queries

If you

- **want** extra copies of this circular/copies of previous circulars, **they can be found on the website at** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-for-local-authorities-subsidy-circulars>
- have any queries about the
  - **technical content of this circular**, contact [feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)
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## Right Benefit Initiative 2017/18 Funding

### Introduction

1. This circular sets out the arrangements for distributing funding for the Right Benefit Initiative (RBI) for 2017/18. More detail on the initiative is available in [HB A7/2017](#).

### Background

2. As part of the continued drive to reduce Housing Benefit (HB) fraud and error, the Department for Work and pensions (DWP) is continuing to provide local authorities (LAs) with funding, in addition to the HB administration subsidy, to target key areas of fraud and error. The RBI funding for 2017/18 is to specifically incentivise LAs to target earnings which is the highest area of fraud and error in HB.
3. RBI replaces the Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme (FERIS) for 2017/18 and will commence from 1 April 2017.
4. A launch letter was issued to the current FERIS contacts on 27 March 2017. This letter contained the detail of the available funding along with estimated number of Optional Real Time Information (RTI) and mandatory Bulk Data Match (BDM) RTI referrals an LA will receive in 2017/18.

### Funding

5. There is a total of £17 million available in funding to help LAs to invest in extra resources to target earnings fraud and error. Each LA's individual RBI funding allocation is provided in Annex A.
6. As RBI focuses on earnings cases, funding has been apportioned across LAs based on the earnings caseload. Two weightings have then been applied to account for the differences in hiring labour across the country and the forecasted Universal Credit caseload decline.
7. In 2016/17 additional FERIS Maintenance Funding was made available to London LAs. For RBI this additional funding is now built into the funding model detailed in paragraph 6, which recognises labour differentials between London and the rest of the country.
8. There is a de-minimus of £5,000 for smaller LAs.
9. LAs will be expected to spend the funding on staffing costs that are additional to business as usual HB costs. This follows the same principle as previous FERIS arrangements and includes seconding people from other areas of the LA, backfilling, recruitment, temporary staff or the payment of overtime.

10. FERIS Maintenance Funding could previously be used to fund IT enhancements and developments which has allowed LAs to extract data which in turn has enabled priority cases to be investigated. However, as the focus is now moving to using Optional RTI to identify changes in earnings, RBI funding should not be used to support further IT investment or to fund annual licence fees for the maintenance and/or continued use of IT software.
11. LAs are required to email [feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) with confirmation that they wish to opt-in to RBI by 21 April 2017.
12. If your LA does not currently receive Optional RTI referrals we also need email confirmation sent to [feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) that you want to start receiving them.
13. The 2017/18 RBI funding will be made in one single up-front payment. It will be paid to an LA as soon as possible, following receipt of the confirmation they wish to opt-in to RBI. Late applications for funding will not be considered.

## Requirements

14. By opting-in to RBI LAs will be required to complete their Optional RTI referrals. These referrals are delivered to LAs on a monthly basis.
15. Where an LA has additional capacity after processing all their Optional RTI referrals in any month they should use their resources to review cases where the claimant or partner has earnings and/or is self-employed and there have been no changes to earnings on their HB claim in the last 12 months.

## Performance monitoring

16. DWP will monitor the volume of each LAs' Optional RTI referrals processed using Single Housing Benefit Extract returns. It is imperative that LAs complete the required Management Information (MI) via their LA IT system. The required actions to ensure the MI is accurate is detailed in [HB A7/2017](#).
17. Where it is considered an LA has low levels of productivity, for example, the volume of Optional RTI referrals processed is not as expected for the capacity RBI funding has provided, we will engage and work collaboratively with the LA to understand the reasons for low productivity and agree any mitigation action. The escalation route is set out below:
  - initial telephone engagement by Housing Delivery Division (HDD) Desk Based Engagement team to understand reasons for low productivity and plans to improve
  - on-site consultancy support from HDD Performance Development Team, including meeting with the Revenue and Benefit Manager

- escalation to HDD Deputy Director for meeting with the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive
- for England: formal inspection and published report to Secretary of State
- for Scotland and Wales: decisions on audit/inspection and the production of reports rest with the relevant audit bodies. DWP will liaise as necessary with these audit bodies
- the recovery of funding in cases of sustained low productivity.

## Recovery of unspent funds

18. The recovery of unspent funds is separate to the decision to recover where an LA has spent the funding but not carried out the required activities. There is an established process, managed by the HDD Payments Resolutions team, to recover funds where an LA receives payment but does not spend it. For example, for Discretionary Housing Payments, unspent funds are recovered from the next payment, or where there is no additional payment, an invoice is sent to the LA for repayment. Please refer to [HB A7/2017](#) for full details.

## Questions

19. Provided at Annex A of [HB A7/2017](#) are a number of frequently asked questions and answers. LAs can also raise any additional questions via email [feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:feris.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) and a member of the team will respond within 5 working days.

**Annex A: Right Benefit Initiative 2017/18 Funding**

<b>LA title</b>	<b>RBI Funding</b>
Aberdeen City	£50,206
Aberdeenshire	£35,388
Adur	£15,394
Allerdale	£18,285
Amber Valley	£24,411
Angus	£14,167
Argyll and Bute	£19,472
Arun	£41,727
Ashfield	£29,383
Ashford	£25,569
Aylesbury Vale	£43,904
Babergh	£18,149
Barking and Dagenham	£113,366
Barnet	£159,598
Barnsley	£51,201
Barrow-in-Furness	£13,131
Basildon	£50,880
Basingstoke and Deane	£49,837
Bassetlaw	£14,946
Bath and North East Somerset	£35,963
Bedford UA	£28,380
Bexley	£76,625
Birmingham	£319,711
Blaby	£12,866
Blackburn with Darwen UA	£38,906
Blackpool UA	£51,959
Blaenau Gwent / Blaenau	£10,506
Bolsover	£16,610
Bolton	£69,709
Boston	£20,105
Bournemouth UA	£62,908
Bracknell Forest UA	£35,977
Bradford	£133,583
Braintree	£33,490
Breckland	£31,919
Brent	£258,866
Brentwood	£13,523
Bridgend / Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr	£26,458
Brighton and Hove UA	£72,997
Bristol, City of UA	£129,635
Broadland	£19,351
Bromley	£82,648
Bromsgrove	£14,821
Broxbourne	£27,539

Broxtowe	£18,043
Burnley	£16,181
Bury	£42,368
Caerphilly / Caerffili	£36,403
Calderdale	£38,415
Cambridge	£22,672
Camden	£123,156
Cannock Chase	£22,927
Canterbury	£37,086
Cardiff / Caerdydd	£81,115
Carlisle	£23,869
Carmarthenshire / Sir	£26,703
Castle Point	£22,210
Central Bedfordshire UA	£61,188
Ceredigion / Ceredigion	£12,311
Charnwood	£30,604
Chelmsford	£36,938
Cheltenham	£23,366
Cherwell	£38,111
Cheshire East UA	£71,460
Cheshire West and Chester UA	£67,310
Chesterfield	£24,507
Chichester	£23,433
Chiltern	£17,358
Chorley	£22,326
Christchurch	£11,494
City of London	£6,568
Clackmannanshire	£13,922
Colchester	£45,760
Conwy / Conwy	£25,191
Copeland	£13,076
Corby	£13,939
Cornwall UA	£150,859
Cotswold	£12,170
County Durham UA	£129,093
Coventry	£104,265
Craven	£7,875
Crawley	£67,774
Croydon	£171,174
Dacorum	£50,148
Darlington UA	£34,635
Dartford	£26,926
Daventry	£12,820
Denbighshire / Sir Ddinbych	£23,684
Derby UA	£64,332
Derbyshire Dales	£12,228
Doncaster	£46,716
Dover	£29,259
Dudley	£60,474

Dumfries and Galloway	£22,969
Dundee City	£50,244
Ealing	£193,001
East Ayrshire	£15,680
East Cambridgeshire	£19,891
East Devon	£30,320
East Dorset	£13,619
East Dunbartonshire	£9,135
East Hampshire	£22,695
East Hertfordshire	£32,344
East Lindsey	£31,173
East Lothian	£10,554
East Northamptonshire	£16,850
East Renfrewshire	£13,286
East Riding of Yorkshire UA	£56,987
East Staffordshire	£26,640
Eastbourne	£30,548
Eastleigh	£26,147
Eden	£5,169
Edinburgh, City of	£112,141
Eilean Siar	£5,000
Elmbridge	£34,081
Enfield	£226,131
Epping Forest	£24,320
Epsom and Ewell	£18,713
Erewash	£19,394
Exeter	£32,723
Falkirk	£31,402
Fareham	£20,545
Fenland	£25,797
Fife	£88,612
Flintshire / Sir y Fflint	£24,802
Forest Heath	£14,955
Forest of Dean	£11,524
Fylde	£14,503
Gateshead	£62,515
Gedling	£24,543
Glasgow City	£223,413
Gloucester	£38,760
Gosport	£30,799
Gravesham	£32,174
Great Yarmouth	£23,835
Greenwich	£152,621
Guildford	£32,179
Gwynedd / Gwynedd	£21,089
Hackney	£254,461
Halton UA	£24,908
Hambleton	£15,271
Hammersmith and Fulham	£83,896



Harborough	£9,335
Haringey	£184,246
Harlow	£34,326
Harrogate	£15,321
Harrow	£107,094
Hart	£15,374
Hartlepool UA	£26,514
Hastings	£27,203
Havant	£22,594
Havering	£80,779
Herefordshire, County of UA	£39,424
Hertsmere	£33,409
High Peak	£13,060
Highland	£21,402
Hillingdon	£134,913
Hinckley and Bosworth	£13,897
Horsham	£25,584
Hounslow	£77,107
Huntingdonshire	£30,275
Hyndburn	£17,043
Inverclyde	£18,266
Ipswich	£46,405
Isle of Anglesey / Ynys Môn	£13,773
Isle of Wight UA	£32,088
Islington	£124,006
Kensington and Chelsea	£57,438
Kettering	£19,091
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	£26,929
Kingston upon Hull, City of UA	£79,987
Kingston upon Thames	£48,408
Kirklees	£104,394
Knowsley	£36,062
Lambeth	£209,558
Lancaster	£22,880
Leeds	£211,806
Leicester UA	£111,548
Lewes	£27,995
Lewisham	£211,964
Lichfield	£9,687
Lincoln	£25,792
Liverpool	£167,592
Luton UA	£82,592
Maidstone	£36,776
Maldon	£11,080
Malvern Hills	£15,034
Manchester	£203,786
Mansfield	£22,163
Medway UA	£77,530
Melton	£5,692

Mendip	£22,307
Merthyr Tydfil / Merthyr Tudful	£14,659
Merton	£73,793
Mid Devon	£11,118
Mid Suffolk	£14,843
Mid Sussex	£26,801
Middlesbrough UA	£57,885
Midlothian	£11,406
Milton Keynes UA	£107,980
Mole Valley	£21,921
Monmouthshire / Sir Fynwy	£10,416
Moray	£9,496
Neath Port Talbot / Castell-	£32,921
New Forest	£27,122
Newark and Sherwood	£21,888
Newcastle upon Tyne	£54,969
Newcastle-under-Lyme	£26,277
Newham	£225,274
Newport / Casnewydd	£39,684
North Ayrshire	£22,638
North Devon	£24,559
North Dorset	£12,719
North East Derbyshire	£17,017
North East Lincolnshire UA	£23,510
North Hertfordshire	£23,848
North Kesteven	£17,459
North Lanarkshire	£80,477
North Lincolnshire UA	£28,448
North Norfolk	£16,661
North Somerset UA	£29,361
North Tyneside	£50,567
North Warwickshire	£14,559
North West Leicestershire	£17,403
Northampton	£65,803
Northumberland UA	£50,164
Norwich	£39,184
Nottingham UA	£85,936
Nuneaton and Bedworth	£31,297
Oadby and Wigston	£8,885
Oldham	£47,329
Orkney Islands	£5,000
Oxford	£52,161
Pembrokeshire / Sir Benfro	£20,384
Pendle	£14,811
Perth and Kinross	£15,288
Peterborough UA	£70,429
Plymouth UA	£75,156
Poole UA	£37,677
Portsmouth UA	£93,383

Powys / Powys	£14,589
Preston	£37,695
Purbeck	£9,624
Reading UA	£69,446
Redbridge	£118,556
Redcar and Cleveland UA	£38,916
Redditch	£20,868
Reigate and Banstead	£37,585
Renfrewshire	£58,066
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff /	£42,380
Ribble Valley	£5,000
Richmond upon Thames	£36,807
Richmondshire	£7,304
Rochdale	£56,690
Rochford	£13,464
Rossendale	£13,532
Rother	£14,726
Rotherham	£48,587
Rugby	£12,342
Runnymede	£17,053
Rushcliffe	£11,784
Rushmoor	£22,810
Rutland UA	£5,791
Ryedale	£8,929
Salford	£92,451
Sandwell	£72,477
Scarborough	£29,796
Scottish Borders	£24,938
Sedgemoor	£25,165
Sefton	£58,509
Selby	£15,475
Sevenoaks	£23,619
Sheffield	£149,828
Shepway	£23,363
Shetland Islands	£5,000
Shropshire UA	£52,593
Slough UA	£71,377
Solihull	£45,514
South Ayrshire	£21,580
South Bucks	£11,087
South Cambridgeshire	£27,677
South Derbyshire	£17,570
South Gloucestershire UA	£57,255
South Hams	£12,066
South Holland	£18,095
South Kesteven	£31,695
South Lakeland	£15,917
South Lanarkshire	£62,587
South Norfolk	£21,639

South Northamptonshire	£12,674
South Oxfordshire	£26,186
South Ribble	£19,235
South Somerset	£29,991
South Staffordshire	£15,526
South Tyneside	£51,791
Southampton UA	£72,899
Southend-on-Sea UA	£45,987
Southwark	£154,858
Spelthorne	£27,881
St Albans	£30,640
St Edmundsbury	£23,701
St. Helens	£42,417
Stafford	£20,616
Staffordshire Moorlands	£12,355
Stevenage	£32,212
Stirling	£11,874
Stockport	£58,791
Stockton-on-Tees UA	£52,614
Stoke-on-Trent UA	£52,512
Stratford-on-Avon	£25,217
Stroud	£21,165
Suffolk Coastal	£21,575
Sunderland	£90,138
Surrey Heath	£14,651
Sutton	£43,835
Swale	£37,447
Swansea / Abertawe	£34,291
Swindon UA	£43,712
Tameside	£67,194
Tamworth	£15,931
Tandridge	£20,709
Taunton Deane	£22,605
Teignbridge	£24,501
Telford and Wrekin UA	£59,919
Tendring	£47,815
Test Valley	£23,123
Tewkesbury	£20,513
Thanet	£38,710
The Vale of Glamorgan / Bro	£30,034
Three Rivers	£21,545
Thurrock UA	£39,825
Tonbridge and Malling	£22,260
Torbay UA	£47,236
Torfaen / Tor-faen	£13,614
Torridge	£13,103
Tower Hamlets	£174,039
Trafford	£40,220
Tunbridge Wells	£28,516

Uttlesford	£9,066
Vale of White Horse	£23,114
Wakefield	£71,707
Walsall	£82,648
Waltham Forest	£130,679
Wandsworth	£159,261
Warrington UA	£30,961
Warwick	£27,255
Watford	£34,888
Waveney	£18,928
Waverley	£29,406
Wealden	£27,023
Wellingborough	£17,726
Welwyn Hatfield	£37,677
West Berkshire UA	£29,898
West Devon	£8,817
West Dorset	£23,640
West Dunbartonshire	£21,130
West Lancashire	£22,548
West Lindsey	£19,921
West Lothian	£31,882
West Oxfordshire	£19,410
West Somerset	£8,513
Westminster	£114,922
Weymouth and Portland	£23,361
Wigan	£48,199
Wiltshire UA	£97,281
Winchester	£17,756
Windsor and Maidenhead UA	£34,239
Wirral	£81,143
Woking	£26,389
Wokingham UA	£23,280
Wolverhampton	£56,826
Worcester	£29,039
Worthing	£30,369
Wrexham / Wreccsam	£36,196
Wychavon	£27,078
Wycombe	£33,799
Wyre	£25,109
Wyre Forest	£27,282
York UA	£40,454