

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

General Information Bulletin

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<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/>

HB/CTB G6/2009

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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 Corporate Document Services Ltd Orderline<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Email: orderline@cds.co.uk• bulletin in general, contact Kath Murphy<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Email: Kath.Murphy@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
Who should read	All Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) staff
Action	For information

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Performance and Good Practice Guide survey

- 1 As you may know, we intend reviewing the Performance and Good Practice Guide (PGPG) to ensure it remains up-to-date and relevant. We recently sent all benefit managers a short survey to obtain their views on the content of the PGPG; we will use the feedback from the survey to inform the direction of the review.
- 2 Just to remind you, the deadline for returning the survey is 17 April 2009. We'd also like to use this opportunity to offer an early thank you to those local authorities (LAs) who have already sent us your views.
- 3 As part of the review we propose including new sections on tele-claiming and e-claiming and to expand the improving customer service-related good practice within the section *Is the service meeting the needs of the community and or users?* We would be grateful to hear from LAs who would be willing to share their good practice in these areas of HB/CTB delivery. We also invite you to provide additional good practice in any other areas or to make suggestions for other aspects of HB/CTB administration and service delivery where you might find additional material helpful.
- 4 Send your good practice to Performance-framework@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or, if you wish to discuss your ideas with us first, please contact Valerie Hunt on 0207 449 5391.

The rapid reclaim process and ESA: clarification

- 5 *HB/CTB Circular A25/2008* described a change in the rapid reclaim arrangements for claims for Income Support (IS), Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Incapacity Benefit (IB). It explained that from 15 December 2008 Jobcentre Plus would use a rapid reclaim form if the customer had received the relevant benefit in the last 26 weeks, rather than 12 weeks as had previously applied.
- 6 The circular did not mention rapid reclaim for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) cases. Please note that rapid reclaim **does** also apply to ESA claims. However, arrangements differ from those for IS, JSA and IB claims in that Jobcentre Plus will only use an ESA rapid reclaim form when the period since the last claim is no greater than 12 weeks. HB/CTB staff should therefore be aware that the HB/CTB rapid reclaim form HBRR1 may be received from ESA customers in these circumstances.

Queries

- 7 If you require any further information please contact
Richard.Grennan@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Local Housing Allowance Guidance Manual Amdt 2

- 8 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Guidance Manual Amdt 2 was issued recently, but unfortunately we have been advised there is a page missing.
- 9 Instructions on the flysheet tell holders to remove and insert the pages containing *paras 3.00-3.61*. Unfortunately the page containing *paras 3.40-3.61* is missing.
- 10 This page is being urgently printed and issued to holders of the manual. CDS, our publishers, apologises for this omission and any inconvenience caused.
- 11 This information should be brought to the attention of holders of the LHA Guidance Manual who may not receive this bulletin.

Statutory Instruments

- 12 The following Statutory Instruments (SIs) have now been laid
- 2009 No.598, The Pensions Act 2008 (Abolition of Safeguarded Rights) (Consequential) Order 2009, coming into force 16 April 2009
 - 2009 No.604, The Social Security (Claims and Payments) Amendment Regulations 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.607, The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Regulations 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.608, The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.609, The Social Security (Transitional Payments) Regulations 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.610, The Social Security Pensions (Low Earnings Threshold) Order 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.614, The Housing Benefit (Amendment) Regulations 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.615, The Occupational, Personal and Stakeholder Pensions (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2009, coming into force from 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.617, The Pensions Regulator (Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.659, The Social Security (Additional Class 3 National Insurance Contributions) Amendment Regulations 2009, coming into force 6 April 2009
 - 2009 No.664, The Workmen's Compensation (Supplementation) (Amendment) Scheme 2009, coming into force 8 April 2009
 - 2009 No.747, The Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation) (Payment of Claims) (Amendment) Regulations 2009, coming into force 1 April 2009

- 2009 No.775 (C.49), The Welfare Reform Act 2007 (Commencement No. 10, Traditional and Savings Provisions) Order 2009, coming into force 27 March 2009

9 Copies of SIs can now be downloaded from DWP's own website <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/docs/lawvols/bluevol/> and the website of the Office of Publication Information <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/stat.htm>.