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# *About this manual*

## *About this chapter*

- 1 This chapter contains overview information about this manual, including
  - what information this manual contains, also what it does not contain and where to find that information
  - how to use it and how the manual is laid out
  - specific terms/words/phrases used in the manual and what is meant by them

## *What this manual contains*

- 2 This manual is for the administration of the Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) schemes by Local Authorities (LAs) and Housing Authorities (HAs) in Great Britain.
- 3 It gives information and guidance about
  - all aspects of the schemes
  - the legal requirements on LAs. Remember however that
    - this manual provides guidance, and is not intended to be an authoritative statement of the law
    - the relevant provision of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 and Social Security Administration Act 1992, as amended, and the regulations and orders made under those Acts are the formal statements of the law, also see *Statutory references* later in this chapter
  - administering HB and CTB
- 4 To decide eligibility to HB or CTB the four main conditions of entitlement are established in turn. Of course if a claimant obviously will not qualify for HB or CTB, for example working age claimants with capital in excess of £16,000, all the qualifying conditions are not established.
- 5 The guidance in this manual is intended for those cases which are not obvious 'nils', and covers each qualifying condition before explaining what housing costs are eligible and how to assess applicable amounts.

## ***What this manual does not contain and where to find that information***

- 6 This manual does **not** include guidance about
- subsidy arrangements to LAs - when they are payable and how to calculate, etc. For subsidy information, see *HB/CTB Subsidy Guidance Manual* which is updated yearly
  - overpayments, see *HB/CTB Overpayments Guide*
  - the administration procedures for dealing with the benefit claims, such as gathering information, and verifying evidence, for more information, see
    - the Adjudication and Operations Circulars, issued by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
    - *HB/CTB Security Guidance, DWP advice and guidance on verification*
    - the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate's *Designing the HB/CTB claim form* for information about effective HB/CTB claim forms

## ***Layout of the HB/CTB Guidance Manual***

- 7 The HB/CTB Guidance Manual is laid out in four volumes
- Guide to the HB/CTB Guidance Manual, containing the
    - Abbreviations
    - Glossary
    - Main contents
    - Index
  - Part A, covering the main conditions of entitlement to HB and CTB
  - Part B, split into working age claimants and pensioners, covering assessment of
    - capital
    - income
    - needs
  - Part C, covering specific aspects , eg Students, People from abroad
  - Part D, covering matters not exclusive to HB/CTB, eg liaison with local DWP offices

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## *How to use this manual*

### *Finding the information you need*

- 8 There are two ways of finding the information you need within this manual
- main contents, which is a list of headings in all the volumes
  - part or chapter contents, see *Contents* below
  - index, which is a comprehensive alphabetical list by subject, which gives all the manual references relating to that subject, see *Index* later in this chapter

### *Main contents*

- 9 There is a main contents at the front of this volume that
- lists the main headings in each chapter of the manual
  - is a quick reference to the structure of the manual and its subject

### *Part contents*

- 10 The manual is divided into four parts. Each part has its own contents showing the chapters in that part. Each chapter in a part also has its own contents showing a detailed list of all the headings in that chapter.

### *Index*

- 11 The index, which is at the back of this volume, cross references the subjects covered by this manual, listing
- 'key words' to help you find a specific subject
  - where in the manual the subject is mentioned and what it relates to, for example

#### **Notifying a decision, A6.22**

Decisions affecting third parties, A6.23

What a decision notice must include, A6.36

## *Words and phrases used with a specific meaning in this manual*

- 12 Some ordinary words and phrases have been used in this manual with a specific meaning to aid ease of reading and understanding. These words and phrases are
- 'you', used to mean the person within the LA making the decision or gathering information and evidence
  - 'LA' or 'authority', used to denote LAs' responsibilities, especially if talking about administration arrangements within an authority
- 13 From 1 April 2002 the Benefits Agency was replaced by the Jobcentre Plus and The Pension Service. In this manual
- DWP should be taken to include
    - Jobcentre Plus offices
    - Jobcentres
    - social security offices
    - The Pension Service
    - an office dealing with Pension Credit
  - Jobcentre Plus should be taken to include
    - Jobcentre and Jobcentre Plus offices
    - social security offices
    - Employment Service offices

## *Glossary*

- 14 At the front of this manual is a *Glossary* which lists specific terms used in the administration of benefit claims and gives an explanation of their meaning within the context of this guidance.

## *Cross references*

- 15 Wherever possible all the main guidance for a particular issue is contained in the same chapter. Sometimes you will be referred to another part of the manual, or to another document for further related information rather than repeating that same information.

- 16 The following cross reference terms are used
- see *Calculating maximum HB/CTB* earlier/later in this **chapter**, as appropriate for information that is in the same chapter
  - see *Calculating benefit* earlier/later in this **part**, as appropriate for information that is in the same part (A, B, C or D)
  - see *Calculating benefit* earlier/later in this **manual**, as appropriate for information that is in a **different** part
- 17 As already stated, each chapter within Part B is split into working age claimants and pensioners, covering the assessment of
- capital
  - income
  - needs
- 18 If a cross reference shows, for example "... see *B3, Assessment of needs*", it is for you to decide whether you need to refer to BW3 or BP3.

## *Statutory references*

19 Reference to the relevant statutory provisions are given under the relevant paragraph or subparagraph of this manual. The abbreviations used are

<b>CP Regs</b>	HB and CTB (Consequential Provisions) Regs 2006
<b>CSPSS</b>	Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act, 2000
<b>D&amp;A</b>	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Decision and Appeals) Regulations 2001
<b>reg</b>	for regulation - refers to a regulation contained in the <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing Benefit Regulations 2006,</li><li>• Council Tax Benefit Regulations 2006,</li><li>• Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for State Pension Credit) Regulations 2006, referred to throughout this manual as HB (SPC) Reg, or</li><li>• Council Tax Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for State Pension Credit) Regulations 2006, referred to throughout this manual as CTB (SPC) Reg</li></ul>
<b>S</b>	for section - refers to a Section of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 or the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992
<b>Sch</b>	for schedule - refers to a Schedule of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 or Council Tax Benefit Regulations 2006
<b>SO</b>	for Subsidy Order - refers to the current Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits (Subsidy) Order
<b>SS Act</b>	Social Security Act 1998
<b>SSA</b>	Social Security Act 1986 (Now repealed)
<b>SSAA</b>	Social Security Administration Act 1992
<b>SSCBA</b>	Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992
<b>SSCS (D&amp;A)</b>	Social Security and Child Support (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 1999, as amended, Part V, Chapters II to V
<b>SSC Proceed Regs</b>	Social Security Commissioners (Procedure) Regulations 1999, as amended by the Social Security Commissioners (Procedure) Regulations 2001