

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

General Information Bulletin

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

HB/CTB G15/2008

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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

Contents

page

New unitary authorities	2
Statutory Instruments.....	3

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New unitary authorities

- 1 In February and March this year the Government approved legislation creating nine new unitary councils from 1 April 2009, covering seven county areas with a population of some 3.2 million and budgets of over £2.4 billion. The new councils will be expected to lead the way with modernising service delivery and achieve savings of £100 million annually with no falling off of performance in any service.
- 2 Details of the existing and new councils are shown in the following table

New Council	Existing Councils
Bedford Borough	Bedfordshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council
Central Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire County Council, Mid-Bedfordshire DC and South Bedfordshire DC
Cheshire East	Cheshire County Council, Crewe and Nantwich DC, Macclesfield BC, Vale Royal DC
Cheshire West & Chester	Cheshire County Council, Chester City, Ellesmere Port and Neston DC Congleton DC
Cornwall	Cornwall County Council, Caradon, DC Carrick DC, Kerrier DC, North Cornwall DC, Penwith DC, Restormel DC
County Durham	Durham County Council, Chester-le-Street DC, Derwentside DC, Durham City Council, Easington DC Sedgefield BC, Teesdale DC, Wear Valley DC
Northumberland	Northumberland County Council, Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed BC, Blyth Valley BC, Castle Morpeth BC, Tynedale DC, Wansbeck DC
Shropshire	Shropshire County Council, Bridgnorth DC, North Shropshire DC, Oswestry BC, Shrewsbury and Atcham BC, South Shropshire DC
Wiltshire	Wiltshire County Council, Kennet DC, North Wiltshire DC, Salisbury DC, West Wiltshire DC

- 3 Merging a county council and up to seven District councils into one new unitary represents a significant challenge and the LA Performance Division in conjunction with the Local Government Association, are working together to support the Benefit services through this process. In LA Performance Division this work is being led by Barrie Fox.
- 4 Aspects which authorities need to consider, together with changes that need to be made by April 2009 were outlined at an initial meeting with authority representatives on 3 June. A further meeting was held on 24 July. In addition, individual help to some authorities has already been provided by Performance Development Team staff. This includes the alignment and testing the suitability of current policies. It is anticipated that this process will continue between now and April 2009.
- 5 Once the new unitary authorities start to bed down, further help from the Performance Development Team will be available to ensure that the opportunities offered by a larger scale of operations is realised .

Queries

- 6 Any questions about this support and the new unitary authorities should be sent to Barrie Fox
Email: barrie.fox@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

Statutory Instruments

- 7 The following Statutory Instruments (Sis) have now been laid
 - 2008, No 794, The Employment and Support Allowance Regulations 2008, CORRECTION
 - 2008 No 1810, The Pension Protection Fund (Entry Rules) Amendment Regulations 2008, coming into force 2 August 2008
 - 2008 No 1826, The Social Security (Students Responsible for Children or Young Persons) Amendment Regulations 2008, coming into force 9 July 2008
 - 2008 No 1879, The Employment and Support Allowance (Consequential Provisions) (No. 3) Regulations 2008, coming into force 27 October 2008
 - 2008 No 1882, The Pensions Act 2004 (Code of Practice) (Dispute Resolution) Appointed Day Order 2008, coming into force 28 July 2008
 - 2008 No 1903, The Financial Assistance Scheme (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2008, coming into force 17 July 2008
 - 2008 No 1963, The Mesothelioma Lump Sum Payments (Conditions and Amounts) Regulations 2008, coming into force 1 October 2008
 - 2008 No 1979, The Personal and Occupational Pension Schemes (Amendment) Regulations 2008, coming into force 1 October 2008
 - 2008 No. 2033 (C.97), The Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008 (Commencement No.2) Order 2008, coming into force from 24 July

8 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>