

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

General Information Bulletin

Department for Work and Pensions, The Adelphi, 1 - 11 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/>

HB/CTB G19/2008

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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

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Changes for lone parents from November 2008

What are the changes?

- 1 The Government is proposing that, from November 2008, lone parents with older children may no longer be entitled to Income Support (IS). This is one of several changes to the benefit system to help lone parents get the skills for work and get into paid work. These changes still have to be approved by Parliament and, if approved, will be introduced from 24 November 2008.
- 2 These proposed changes would mean that a lone parent with a youngest child aged 12 or over who is claiming IS as a lone parent (and not for any other reason – see below) will have to look for paid work and make a claim for another benefit. The changes will be introduced over the next year and the date that their IS will end depends on the age of their youngest child on 24 November 2008.

Will these changes apply to all lone parents?

- 3 These changes will not apply to lone parents if they are entitled to IS for other reasons. For example, if they
 - have children who are entitled to the middle-rate or highest-rate care component of Disability Living Allowance
 - get Carer's Allowance
 - are fostering and have a foster child living with them
- 4 This list is not exhaustive and lone parents are asked to speak to an adviser if they are unsure about whether the changes will apply to them.
- 5 Lone parents who are already full-time students, or taking a course as part of New Deal for lone parents, or similar, may be able to keep getting their IS payments for longer. They will need to speak to their adviser for details.

How will lone parents be told about the change?

- 6 Customers affected by the change will receive letters in November confirming the changes. In addition, Options and Choices events, which explain the changes via a slide presentation, have been taking place across the country since April 2008. Fact sheets are also being produced for lone parents to support discussions with advisers about the changes during Work Focused Interviews.
- 7 Lone parents will be contacted eight weeks before their IS is due to end, to invite them to attend a voluntary interview. Most lone parents will be invited from March 2009 onwards. During this interview, the changes and their options will be explained to them. The letter will tell them when their final payment of IS will be made.

What other benefits can they claim?

- 8 Those who haven't found paid work when their IS ends, will be able to apply for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or if they are unable to work due to a health condition or disability, the new Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Will HB and CTB be affected?

- 9 Lone parents are being told that there should be no break in their HB or CTB if they move to JSA or ESA. Jobcentre Plus will tell the council, on their behalf, about any changes to their benefit claims.

Queries

- 10 If you need any further advice or information about these changes please contact Mark.Flounders@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Changes to the TAS1 procedures

- 11 Local Authority (LA) appeals officers need to be aware that there is an important change on the action to take from and including 3 November 2008 when appeal documents are being issued to appellants.
- 12 From and including 3 November 2008 you must **not** include a TAS1 when sending any bundle of appeal submission documents to an appellant. From that date the Tribunals Service (TS) has assumed responsibility for issuing these forms. The appeal submission bundles should be sent to the appellant, and their representative if there is one, and to the TS in the normal way.
- 13 LA appeals staff need to bear this change in mind when they are ordering stocks of TAS1 forms.

Queries

- 14 Please direct any enquiries to DMA-Office-Support-L@dwpgsi.gov.uk

Employment and Support Allowance - Electronic Transfer of Data (ETD)

- 15 This item originally appeared in *HB Direct issue 82, October 2008* but unfortunately contained an incorrect hyperlink. This item is being repeated and now contains the correct hyperlink for you to use. This corrected hyperlink will also appear on the website version of HB direct.
- 16 You will already be aware that Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) contribution based ETDs will not be available until April 2009. Unfortunately, from ESA Go-live, ETDs relating to ESA for income related (IR) cases will not clearly distinguish themselves from JSA income based ETDs therefore an interim solution is required until this can be fixed on 8 December 2008. Details of this six week interim solution are detailed in the **ESA Operational Guide – interim process** which can be found at

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/claims-processing/operational-manuals/esaoperationalguidancev2-0-2.pdf>

Queries

- 17 For more information contact Simon Wainwright
simon.wainwright@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
01132324438

National Identity Scheme - ID Cards for Foreign Nationals

- 18 The first part of the National Identity Scheme begins on 25 November 2008 with the issuing of compulsory ID cards to Foreign (non-European Economic Area (EEA)) nationals who are already in the UK and are extending their stay. The cards are being rolled out gradually and the first categories to be introduced will be for
- students
 - the husband, wife, civil partner or unmarried partner of someone holding permanent residence in the United Kingdom
- 19 The cards will be used to provide evidence of the holder's nationality, identity and status in the UK, and will be produced in connection with claims for Social Security benefits including HB and CTB.

- 20 We are waiting for more information/guidance from UK Borders Agency in order to determine the impact on our business, including any implications for customers affected by the need for ID cards when accessing our services. We will in turn then provide further updates and guidance, including specific information about what the cards will look like and how they can be used to check a customer's identity.
- 21 In the meantime you can find out more information about why the cards are being introduced and how they will be used by accessing
- the Home Office UK Border Agency website, or
 - Phillip.De-Souza@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

‘In and Out of Work Processes’ – Ministerial Announcement on National Implementation

Introduction

- 22 National implementation of the in and out of work processes (see background para 22) will be announced via a press release, and a planned ministerial visit to Clapham Common Jobcentre on 16 October 2008. The existing pilot areas (Liverpool, Lambeth, West Somerset, West Lothian, Merthyr Tydfil and Sedgemoor) will be extended in the first phase of rollout to Borders, West Dunbartonshire, Clackmannanshire, Inverclyde, St Helens, Gateshead, North East Derbyshire, Sunderland, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Guildford, Plymouth, Caerphilly, Southwark and Tower Hamlets.
- 23 Following the announcement of the implementation, LAs may face enquiries from customers about the new processes and need to be aware that
- the new service is planned to be phased in nationally over the next 18 months. Customers should continue to make claims and report changes in their usual way until the new service has reached their area
 - if the LA is rolling out the in and out of work processes in the near future customers should be told the ‘go-live’ date to highlight when the new process will take effect
- 24 Jobcentre Plus have appointed Implementation Managers in each region, Scotland and Wales and are working with LAs to agree rollout schedules, help arrange necessary training and provide a smooth transition for LAs as the pilots rollout.

Background

- 25 The in and out of work processes have been piloted in six LAs since September 2007. The evaluation of the pilots led to ministers giving approval for national implementation of the new processes. The pilots, run jointly between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and LAs, were set up to streamline the current process that customers thought were cumbersome, time consuming and repetitive.

What happens now?

- 26 Currently, customers have to provide information separately to Jobcentre Plus to claim JSA or IS, HMRC for Tax Credits and LAs for HB or CTB. Research has shown that this has proved to be a disincentive for people to enter the labour market, particularly for short term employment, as the process doesn't lend itself to switching benefits 'on and off' quickly.

The new process

- 27 The new processes have been developed by staff from all three organisations and customers. In future, evidence for in and out of work benefits will be collected by Jobcentre Plus, then shared via Government Connect Secure eXtranet – the secure Government system for the exchange of personal data. This will provide a single point of contact for customers, reduce duplication and at the same time speed up benefit payments.

Who will this affect?

- 28 The change will affect all customers claiming JSA, and lone parents claiming IS, who are required to attend the Jobcentre for immediate work focussed interviews. It will not affect customers who are claiming benefit on the grounds of incapacity.

Contact for further information

- 29 For further information contact Mike Coda
MIKE.CODA@JOBCENTREPLUS.GSI.GOV.UK
0113 2519766

Single HB Extract

- 30 This item refers to the Single HB Extract and provides an update on the data transfer and evaluation processes that will be in place from October 2008.

Background

- 31 The Single HB Extract is the primary source of HB/CTB performance data returned to DWP by LAs. The Single HB Extract will eventually replace the requirement for LAs to also provide a monthly extract to the Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS) for data matching.
- 32 *HB/CTB Circular A9/2008* advised LAs of the methodology to be used to collect Single HB Extract data from May 2008. To date, Single HB Extract data has been received from approximately 85% of LAs and this is expected to continue to increase over the coming months.

Guidance on Single HB Extract data transfer arrangements from October 2008

- 33 All data transfers between LAs and DWP should continue to use the current PGP encrypted email process. The Data Take On and Processing Schedule (DTOPS), provides the schedule for all data transfers for both HBMS and Single HB Extract data until April 2009 (as per *HB/CTB Circular A9/2008 Appendix B*).
- 34 The Responsible Encryptor (RE) at each LA will continue to receive an email one week prior to their scheduled data transfer date to confirm transfer arrangements for their Single HB Extract data.
- 35 The email requests advance notice of any issues likely to prevent data transfer on the scheduled date and also any change of contact details at the LA.
- 36 On the scheduled data transfer date, the RE should submit their latest Single HB Extract data, selecting the appropriate PGP public keys for all of the following Housing Benefit Data Services (HBDS) personnel
- Leigh Armstrong
 - Coral Smart
 - Lianne Leighton
- 37 The encrypted data should then be sent to Leigh.Armstrong@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.
- 38 LAs will be contacted if data fails to arrive or load successfully. LAs should remain aware that their Single HB Extract should be submitted on the scheduled date. HBDS are unable to accept data on alternative dates. Data that fails to load will result in performance information being missed for that month.
- 39 LAs are asked to ensure that their Single HB Extract contains the correct Header and Trailer details. Data should also be as up to date as possible and no older than one week at the date of transfer to DWP.

- 40 HBMS extracts should continue to be issued to EDS BMT as outlined in *HB/CTB Circular A7/2008*.

Data validation and HBMS Switch-Off

- 41 During October and November 2008, the HBMS Data Integrity Team (DIT) will receive a copy of each LA's Single HB Extract from HBDS for evaluation purposes. The quality of data within the Single HB Extract will be compared against the corresponding HBMS extract.
- 42 In December 2008, HBMS DIT will advise LAs individually if the Single HB Extract can replace their HBMS extract. From January 2009, these LAs will no longer be required to provide a HBMS extract. LAs are therefore advised to submit both the HBMS and Single HB Extract until they are individually contacted and advised otherwise.
- 43 Evaluation will continue for all remaining LAs. Regular data quality reports will be provided by HBMS DIT to advise of any data quality issues that exist within their Single HB Extract.
- 44 It is anticipated that the Single HB Extract will become the source of data for HBMS matching for all LAs by April 2009.

Contacts

- 45 If you have a query about this subject, the contact details are

Single HB Extract

- Data transfer (via PGP encrypted email only)
Leigh.Armstrong@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
- General enquiries
Hbsdial-scan@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

HBMS Extract

- Data transfer (via PGP encrypted email only)
 - clairealison.smith@eds.com
 - simon.lee@eds.com
 - wendy.taylor@eds.com
 - Colin.Stewart1@eds.dss.gsi.gov.uk
 - Jackie.Poppleton@eds.dss.gsi.gov.uk
- General enquiries
lfddms.hbmsdit@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Statutory Instruments

- 46 The following Statutory Instruments (SIs) have now been laid
- 2008 No. 2424, The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No.4) Regulations 2008, coming into force 6 October 2008
 - 2008 No. 2428, The Employment and Support Allowance (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2008, coming into force 27 October 2008
 - 2008 No. 2450, The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008, coming into force 13 October 2008
- 47 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>