

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

General Information Bulletin

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

HB/CTB G9/2008

7 May 2008

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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Security Performance Measure PM10 2007/08 (unitary Councils in England subject to CPA)

Background

- 1 In *HB/CTB Bulletin G6/2008*, published on 25 March 2008, we indicated that we had been approached by a small number of LAs who considered that they were able to demonstrate that they would have achieved a higher score for PM10 over 12 months rather than by being measured by DWP over the six months for which we have data.
- 2 DWP acknowledged that, if this were the case, the DWP measurement of PM10 may have a detrimental effect on an authority's Benefits score which in turn could impact on the authority's CPA score for 2008.
- 3 In this update we give you further information on the process we have agreed with the Local Authority Associations (LAAs) to consider **exceptional** cases and invite applications for reconsideration.

Criteria for applying for reconsideration

- 4 The process for a reconsideration of an LAs PM10 score will apply **only** to those LAs subject to CPA 2008 (ie English unitaries) **and** these LAs must provide clear evidence that their actual performance for the year against double the target in *HB/CTB Bulletin G3/2008* would give them a better Benefits score for CPA than measuring performance over the first six months.
- 5 LAs
 - must be subject to CPA 2008, excluding those who have already scored a '4' for PM10 (as published in *HB/CTB Bulletin G3/2008*) **and**
 - would have scored better by using their 12 months performance data **and**
 - be able to demonstrate that their current PM10 score (based on six months data) will adversely affect their Benefits score

Evidence

- 6 The LA must also be able to provide clear evidence of
- their expected Benefits score for CPA based on self-assessment, and how re-consideration of their PM10 score would improve it
- and either**
- improved performance against PM10 in the second half of the year
- or**
- an improving trend against PM10 over the first six months that, if sustained, would have meant better performance in the second half of the year leading to an improved overall score for the full year. This must be backed up by evidence of a plan, agreed earlier in the year, that it was being adhered to and would ensure achievement of the required standards by the year end

Application process

- 7 In the first instance, authorities who consider that they satisfy the criteria detailed above, should make their case in writing stating the evidence they hold to support their application. Applications, clearly marked '**Application for reconsideration of PM10 score-GB G9/2008**' should be sent to Philip.Massey@dwp.qsi.gov.uk
- 8 Please do not send any reports or data with the initial application. We will get in touch with you to request any data we need from you. Please provide details of a named contact (email and phone number) for this purpose.

Deadline for submitting applications

- 9 In order to adhere to the overarching CPA 2008 timetable, applications for reconsideration must be submitted to DWP at the latest by **21 May 2008**.

Queries

- 10 Any enquiries regarding the process should be addressed to Philip.Massey@dwp.qsi.gov.uk or telephone 0207 962 8293.

Right Benefit Indicator

Measurement and Publication of NI 180 performance data on HoBOD

- 11 The resumption of data exchange between LAs and DWP is now well under way. The performance data for right time benefit indicator will be derived by establishing the changes in benefit entitlement as seen between two HBMS extracts.
- 12 In view of the staggered restart of HBMS extracts, in discussion with local authorities' associations we have agreed that for 2008/09 the right benefit indicator will not begin to be measured until June 08. This will ensure that data from all authorities is available by then and taken into account.
- 13 Performance data derived from the June 2008 HBMS extracts will be published on HoBOD towards the end of June 2008 and will show the number of changes to entitlement local authorities have processed since 1 June. The data will be derived by counting the number of customers who have had a change to their HB/CTB entitlement as shown on the June HBMS extract when compared to the May HBMS extract. Since some of those changes will have occurred prior to 1 June, the number of changes observed on the June extract will be scaled down pro rata in accordance with the proportion of days between the two extracts which occurred in June. (An identical procedure was followed for PM10 in April 2007.)
- 14 We plan to issue a more detailed circular on the two performance indicators very soon. But in the meantime we felt that this information should help authorities plan their target setting.

Queries

- 15 Any enquiries to be addressed to Performance-framework@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Statutory Instruments

- 16 The following Statutory Instrument (SI) has now been laid
 - **2008 No 632, The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order 2008**, coming into force 7 April 2008
- 17 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>

Changes to the Risk Scored Review Lists issued by the Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS)

Background

- 18 HBMS risk-scored review (RSR) lists were introduced in October 2003. The RSR process uses intelligence-led methodology to produce a list of HB/CTB cases identifying the likelihood of a payment error existing. RSRs are issued to each LA by HBMS as part of the monthly data matching exercise.

Removal of the pre April 2005 version of the risk score

- 19 HBMS introduced a revised output format for RSR lists in April 2005. The new layout identified the risk group (1-6) and also the most likely causes of the overpayment. Feedback from authorities has confirmed that this information is useful when selecting and undertaking intervention activities.
- 20 Since then, HBMS has continued to issue both the original (pre April 2005) and revised versions of the risk score. General Bulletin HB/CTB G5/2007 informed you that HBMS were considering the impact of phasing out the original RSR format.
- 21 Feedback from authorities and their software suppliers indicates that the latest version of the risk score is now widely used. HBMS intend therefore to only issue the April 2005 format of the risk score, to coincide with the reintroduction of the risk score in May 2008.
- 22 The risk scored list will continue to be identified as 'RISK_NEW' and will be issued in accordance with recently implemented data transfer procedures (i.e. PGP encrypted email to the Responsible Encryptor at each LA – see HB/CTB A7/2008). You will continue to receive both the text and Excel versions of the risk score.

Changes to the review frequency within the risk score

- 23 The RSR methodology is continually reviewed and modified to improve performance.
- 24 Currently, the HBMS risk score suppresses cases from reappearing on the list where the period since the last review is within six months (working age cases) or three years (pensioner cases).
- 25 Fourteen LAs took part in a Frequency of Reviews pilot during the period October 2006 to March 2007. The pilot's objective was to test the impact of more frequent reviews. Results from the pilot support increasing the frequency of reviews from six months to three months for working age, risk group one cases.

- 26 This amendment to the risk score is now available and will be incorporated into the risk scored lists from May 2008. From that time, cases will be suppressed according to the following criterion:

Working Age Claimants

Risk Group	Suppression period since last review
1	3 months
2, 3, 4, 5, 6	6 months

Pensioner Age Claimants

Risk Group	Suppression period since last review
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	3 years

- 27 Cases will continue to be suppressed where ongoing review activity is recorded.

Queries

- 28 For any enquiries please contact: Chris Fuller, HBMS Data Integrity Team
email: chris.j.fuller@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Current HB/CTB Circulars

- 29 Following the issue of HB/CTB Guidance Manual, Amendment 15, the current 'A' circulars are listed in the table below.

Number	Subject
A30/2003	Return to Work Credit
A17/2006 A17/2006 (Revised)	Targeting working age cases to reduce fraud and error in HB/CTB Reissued as A17/2006 (Revised)
A20/2006	Changes to Security Performance Measures
A1/2007	Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS) Data Take on and Processing Schedule (DTOPS) 29
A5/2007	Submission of annual self-assessments against the HB/CTB Performance Standards for 2006/07
A9/2007	Proposals for the Right Time and right benefit indicators to be included in the new Performance Framework from April 2008

Number	Subject
A10/2007	The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No.5) Regulations 2007
A12/2007	Use and verification of claims information Changes to certain appointee arrangements
A13/2007	Details of the intended distribution of data collection modernisation funding
A14/2007	Border and Immigration Agency Case Resolution exercise
A1/2008	Return to Work Credit
A2/2008	HB/CTB Performance Indicators from April 2008
A3/2008	Recovery from customers who have been declared bankrupt
A4/2008	HB/CTB Right Benefit Performance Indicator from April 2008
A5/2008	Guidance on completion of the Single HB Extract fields for the derivation of the performance data for the 'Right Time' and 'Right Benefit' indicators
A6/2008	The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No 698)Regulations 2008 In Work Credit
A7/2008	Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS) Data Take on and Processing Schedule (DTOPS) 30
A8/2008	The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments)(No 2) Regulations 2008
A9/2008	Housing Benefit Data Services (HBDS) Timetable and process for the extraction and transfer of the Single HB Extract for 2008/09

30 You may destroy all other HB/CTB A circulars, but we recommend you keep at least one copy of each for reference purposes.