

## Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Circular

Department for Work and Pensions

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# HB/CTB A13/2008

### ADJUDICATION AND OPERATIONS CIRCULAR

<b>WHO SHOULD READ</b>	All Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) staff
<b>ACTION</b>	For information
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Housing Benefit Database and Matching Service (HBDMS) timetable and process for the return of Stats124s 2007/08

### Guidance Manual

The information in this circular does not affect the content of the HB/CTB Guidance Manual.

### Queries

If you

- want **extra copies of this circular/copies of previous circulars**, they can be found on the website at [www.dwp.gov.uk/hbctb](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/hbctb)
- have any queries about the
  - **technical content of this circular**, contact Jan Ripley  
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  - **distribution of this circular**, contact Corporate Document Services Ltd Orderline  
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and process for the return of Stats124s 2007/08**

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## Housing Benefit Database and Matching Service (HBDMS) timetable and process for the return of Stats124s 2007/08

### Introduction

- 1 This circular refers to a further opportunity for local authorities (LAs) to submit Stats 124 data (quarter 3 and quarter 4 – 2007/08) if they have not previously done so and a final chance to make amendments as necessary to Stats 124 data for 2007/08.
- 2 HBDMS are giving LAs a further opportunity to return missing Stats 124 quarter 3 (October – December 2007) and quarter 4 (January – March 2008) data, plus a final chance to make amendments to 2007/08 Stats 124 data before the deadline of **Friday 25 July 2008**. Due to the discontinuation of Stats 124 from April 2008 **no new submissions or amendments will be possible after this deadline**.

### Background

- 3 In April 2008 HBDMS issued notification, via e-mail, an article in *HB Direct* and guidance on the website (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/statistical/>) that we were to resume collection of aggregate level data (Stats 124). However following a number of enquiries from LAs it has become apparent that not all LAs were aware of this and failed to submit data.
- 4 DWP are therefore giving a further opportunity to enable LAs to submit their quarter 3 and 4 data if they have not previously done so. We will also consider any necessary amendments to previously submitted Stats 124 returns for 2007/08 if they are returned by 25 July 2008. This additional opportunity is an exception to the policy we would normally adhere to in relation to the deadline for data returns and is the final opportunity to submit Stats 124 data to DWP. Given the discontinuation of Stats 124 from 2008/09 it will not be possible for LAs to submit any new Stats 124 returns or make amendments after the deadline of 25 July 2008.
- 5 The Stats 124 return is now produced in an electronic format. LAs should ensure that they use this new electronic format when submitting their quarter 3 and 4 data or amendments to previous quarters. Details of where to obtain this version of the return are given in *paragraph 6* below.

### Transfer of data direct from the LA

- 6 HBDMS have produced a Stats 124 in excel format which is available for download from the DWP website (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/statistical/>). This will allow LAs to key the data into the spreadsheet and forward direct to the HBDMS e-mail address ([HBDDataService@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HBDDataService@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)), thus allowing greater time for completion .

- 7 Having downloaded and saved the Excel spreadsheet from the website
- a open the document
  - b enter your report details into the relevant cell
  - c save the document as S124\_Q3\_la number.xls (or S124\_Q4\_la number.xls dependent on whether you are returning quarter 3 or 4 data), and
  - d return the spreadsheet to the above e-mail address.

If amendments are being provided to quarter 1 or 2 data for 2007/08 the same electronic method should be used and document saved with the appropriate titles.

- 8 Care should be taken to avoid changing the positioning of the data cells or entering numbering/spaces in between cells as this will affect the effectiveness of the HBDMS loading process. This could lead to your data not being included in the final publication of data on HOBOD.

### **Transfer of data via third party suppliers**

- 9 Return of Stats 124 data via an agreed third party supplier should be forwarded to HBDMS using the previously agreed procedure.
- 10 For further details on the timetable or data quality issues please contact the HBDMS Team in Newcastle (see *Appendix A* for a complete contact list).

### **Data on HOBOD/Letters to Chief Executives**

- 11 Following receipt of missing data for quarters 3 and 4 and any amendments to other quarters we will amend the performance data on HOBOD. Until then the national level performance for 2007/08 should be treated as provisional. We will also re-issue pen-picture letters to Chief Executives where necessary.

## **HBDMS contacts**

### **Housing Benefit Database and Matching Service**

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