

## Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Circular

Department for Work and Pensions

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# HB/CTB A20/2008

### 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>	Change to method of claiming HB/CTB for people applying for Pension Credit over the phone

### Guidance Manual

The information in this circular does affect the content of the HB/CTB Guidance Manual. Please annotate this circular number against *Chapter A2 Paragraphs A2.190, A2.203, A2.215-239, A2.240-272, A2.302, A2.370-372.*

### 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/housingbenefit/user-communications/circulars/](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/user-communications/circulars/)
- have any queries about the
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## Change to method of claiming HB/CTB for people applying for Pension Credit over the phone

### Introduction

- 1 This circular provides information about *The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/2299)*. These regulations introduce changes to the process for claiming Housing and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) when that claim is made alongside a DWP benefit.
- 2 The regulations permit HB/CTB claims to be taken by telephone at the same time as a customer is making a claim to certain DWP benefits, ie Pension Credit, Income Support (IS), Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
- 3 These regulations came into force on 1 October 2008. A copy can be downloaded from DWP's website at
  - <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/docs/lawyers/bluevol>, or
  - the website of the Office of Public Information at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/stat.htm>
- 4 Initially the new arrangements will apply when customers claim HB/CTB over the phone alongside Pension Credit.
- 5 A separate bulletin, *G20/2008*, has been issued that
  - gives details of the new process, and
  - provides a 'go live' date for claims made to The Pension Service

### Background

- 6 Telephone claims for DWP benefits have been in place in some form for some time. The new arrangements mean that customers can have all their details taken over the telephone, and they will not need to sign or complete a written claim form.
- 7 Initially the new arrangements will apply to claims for HB/CTB that are made alongside Pension Credit. While the regulations come into force from 1 October, the new service is unlikely to be available until the end of October or early November 2008. This is covered in the separate bulletin, *G20/2008*.
- 8 It is expected that a similar service will be introduced for claims made alongside Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), once ESA has had a chance to bed down.

## What do these improvements mean for the customer?

- 9 The significant improvements for all customers who are applying for HB/CTB alongside Pension Credit are
- customers will not need to complete or sign a HB/CTB claim form when they apply over the telephone. This simplified HB/CTB claims process will align with the claim processes already in place for State Pension and Pension Credit
  - customers will no longer need to complete supplementary forms for children and non dependants
  - 100% of all HB/CTB claims taken alongside a new Pension Credit application will be forwarded direct to the relevant Local Authority (LA) ensuring that take up is increased
  - customers will not need to provide their LA with the same information and evidence they have already given to Pension Disability Carer's Service (PDCS) formerly The Pension Service

## Briefing pack

- 10 Briefing packs to explain the new procedure were handed out at LA Delivery Events throughout May and June 2008.
- 11 This LA briefing pack entitled *HB/CTB Telephone Claims via The Pension Service - October 2008* sets out the background to the improved HB/CTB application process in relation to HB/CTB claims taken by The Pension Service over the telephone and how it affects LAs. A copy can be accessed at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/claims-processing/working-with-dwp/pensions.asp> along with further information about the new service.