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Guidance

LA Welfare Direct 9/2022

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[Contents](#)

[Contact](#)

[Who should read](#)

[Action](#)

[Editorial](#)

[Reminder: How to complete the SHBE field on number of bedrooms for Local Housing Allowance households](#)

[Rollout of the Payment Deduction Programme reconciliation and LA conference call](#)

[Update: Care Home Information Service solution](#)

[HB Award Accuracy Initiative: Year 2 outcomes](#)

[Personal Independence Payment extension exercise for claims awaiting review](#)

[Planned HBAA Initiative and Verify Earnings and Pensions service workshops](#)

[New Style Employment and Support Allowance: Change to new claims telephone number](#)

[Managed move of claimants to Universal Credit: Discovery phase expands to Harrow and Northumberland](#)

[HB decisions by the Upper Tribunal](#)

[New Legislation](#)

[What's new on our HB pages on \[www.gov.uk\]\(http://www.gov.uk\)](#)



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Contact

If you have queries about the:

- technical content of this bulletin then contact details are given at the end of each article
- general content and distribution of this bulletin, contact lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk

Who should read

All Housing Benefit staff

Action

For information

Editorial

Welcome to the September 2022 edition of the Local Authority Welfare Direct (LAWD) bulletin. I write this in late August, just a week away from the announcement of a new Prime Minister. Whoever it turns out to be, central government has made it clear that it has been working on options for them to make decisions on, in relation to the worsening cost of living crisis.

Whatever options are chosen, it is likely there will be impacts on various national and local welfare payments to be worked through. The work to support vulnerable local citizens never stops and you can be sure that my colleagues and I in the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division will continue to work in partnership with local authorities (LAs) via our consultation groups to do our best to minimise any impacts.

The work on short notice policy announcements often makes the headlines and my own data sharing and data security teams play our part in delivering these initiatives. However, for me, it is very important that we maintain capacity to fund and deliver longer term more transformational changes. An example from 20 months ago being our work to share data with LAs for Blue Badge administration purposes, which saved LAs £40 million a year in administration costs and significantly reduced the length of time for claimants to have Blue Badge permits issued or renewed.

In this LAWD you'll see an article updating you about our work on the Care Home Information Sharing (CHIS) project. This will introduce the automated real time sharing of Care Home admissions and exits from LAs to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This really will be a transformational change when completed. Currently, DWP only ever finds out about 50% of admissions and exits and the ones we do find out about are reported very late. This is quite understandable from the perspective of the claimant and their families, as the reporting of such a life event to DWP is not at the forefront of their minds at, what can be, a very stressful time. The introduction of the data share should near eliminate overpayments, underpayments and any associated recovery or rebate activity and, hopefully, improve the overall claimant experience.

You'll also find within important updates about the Payment Deduction Programme reconciliation exercise, Move to Universal Credit and much more. As ever, we hope you find the updates useful.

Hope you enjoy what is left of the good weather in September!

Paul Selby, Deputy Divisional Manager, LA-PED

Reminder: How to complete the SHBE field on number of bedrooms for Local Housing Allowance households

1. The data provided by local authorities (LAs) through SHBE (Single Housing Benefit Extract) on the number of bedrooms for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) households is used by DWP analysts to look at issues around over-occupation and under-occupation. This helps build the evidence base to support decisions on what to do with LHA uprating each year.
2. The SHBE guidance asks that for each LHA household LAs should record the number of bedrooms for which the claimant's household has sole use in the property they are renting. If the number of bedrooms is unknown for an LHA household then the LA **must leave the field blank**.
3. However, some LAs are not leaving this field blank and are recording a zero in this field. This makes the analysis of this data set difficult to understand.
4. Each individual SHBE LA return is important as it enables DWP analysts to present an overall picture across Great Britain.
5. If you have any queries about the content of this article, contact lawelfare.datamatching@dwp.gov.uk in the first instance.

Rollout of the Payment Deduction Programme reconciliation and LA conference call

6. Following the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division's Performance Development Team's review of the Payment Deduction Programme (PDP) in 2018, we identified a need to reconcile LA Housing Benefit (HB) debts and balances against those held on the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP's) Debt Management System.

7. Both Debt Management and LA-PED are now in a position to commence rollout of the PDP reconciliation for all LAs in a staged approach. We will do this through a series of LA tranches and the tranche details will be communicated and placed on Glasscubes once finalised. The first tranche of LAs will start in October 2022.

8. We will be hosting an all LA conference call on 20 September 2022 at 11am to 12 noon where more information will be provided. This will include the action for LAs to undertake prior to commencement of the rollout, an explanation of what will be required during the rollout, details of the tranches and an opportunity to ask questions. The call will be recorded and then placed on Glasscubes.

9. All LAs will be required to provide a single point of contact for this reconciliation exercise and more details will be covered during the call.

10. The joining instructions are:

- the MS Teams link to this forum has been shared in the version of the LAWD9/2022 that was sent directly to each LA's single inbox.
- note: It is more difficult to ask questions through telephone dial-in so, if you anticipate having questions, we recommend joining through MS Teams where possible.
- aim to join the event two or three minutes before the start time, as we intend to start promptly.
- speakers will be muted by default but instructions will be given during the event if you want to ask a question.

11. Details for this event will also be posted on Glasscubes by 12 September 2022.

12. We look forward to your participation on the call during which detailed information will be provided. However, if you need to contact us in advance email michelle.fazackerley@dwp.gov.uk or helen.hilland@dwp.gov.uk

Update: Care Home Information Service solution

13. Since the last update in [LAWD12/2021](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2021/la-welfare-direct-122021>), LA-PED has continued working with Adult Social Care (ASC) IT software suppliers to design and develop the Care Home Information Service (CHIS) solution.

Latest position

14. LA-PED is working towards starting an early adopter trial from November 2022 with LAs, ASC IT software suppliers and DWP staff administering Attendance Allowance.

15. This trial will be with a small number of early adopter LAs and LA-PED is currently engaging with LAs to identify those who will support this.

16. The trial will be testing the automated data sharing solution as well as the care home information that LAs send to DWP Attendance Allowance staff via the automated process. Those staff will then use this data to make a decision on a citizen's Attendance Allowance payments.

17. Throughout the duration of the trial DWP will be gathering management information and the outcomes will be used to support and inform our future wider implementation approach.

18. There will be minimal impact on LAs throughout the trial period and LA-PED will share the findings as the trial progresses.

19. Subject to the trial progressing as planned, DWP is aiming to onboard the automated data sharing solution to all LAs from early 2023.

Next steps

20. DWP is currently gathering some early insight into matching ASC information to DWP information and has issued a questionnaire to a number of LAs to provide this insight. The plan is to issue this questionnaire to all LAs working with ASC systems in mid to late September 2022.

21. DWP will be looking at the requirements for LAs to connect to the CHIS solution and LA-PED will supply guidance and instructions to LAs in readiness for implementation.

22. If you need any further information, do not hesitate to contact lawelfare.ladsdeliveryteam@dwp.gov.uk

HB Award Accuracy Initiative: Year 2 outcomes

23. Many LAs have asked for the outcomes from the first full year (in other words, financial year ending March 2022) of the HB Award Accuracy (HBAA) Initiative.

24. DWP analysts have calculated outcomes as follows:

- A total overpayments = £37.7 million
- B total underpayments = £11.8 million
- C total delivery costs = £7.0 million
- D benefit cost ratio (A minus B divided by C) = 3.7 to 1

25. Benefit cost ratio by individual component:

- Full Case Reviews = 2.71 to 1
- Housing Benefit Matching Service rules = 8.04 to 1
- Self-Employment Reviews = 5.74 to 1

26. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all participating LAs for their hard work in achieving these results and for striving to ensure HB claims are paid correctly.

27. If you have any queries regarding the HBAA Initiative, contact lawelfare.frauderrordebtdwp@dwp.gov.uk

Personal Independence Payment extension exercise for claims awaiting review

28. DWP has seen an unprecedented increase in the volume of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) new claims and is currently prioritising assessing new claims.

29. To ensure that claims awaiting review do not go out of payment we have been extending them 28 days before their end date by three months. DWP is planning to automatically extend existing claims awaiting review by up to 12 months and will do this 35 days before their end date.

30. LAs will continue to receive ATLAS (Automated Transfer to LA Systems) notifications as normal and Blue Badge renewal requests linked to PIP extensions should reduce.

31. This change is planned to start from 6 September 2022. The LA Security and Support Team will confirm the change has been successfully implemented via Glasscubes.

32. If you have any questions about the content of this article, contact lawelfare.lasupport@dwp.gov.uk

Planned HBAA Initiative and Verify Earnings and Pensions service workshops

33. We announced in July's [LAWD7/2022](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-72022>) that LA-PED was planning to hold regional workshops for participants of the HBAA Initiative and the Verify Earnings and Pensions (VEP) service starting in October 2022.

34. These events have now been finalised and will run from mid-October to mid-November 2022. All information about these workshops was sent directly to LA's single inboxes on 26 August 2022. The deadline to request a space at one of the face-to-face or virtual workshops is Friday 9 September 2022.

35. For any further information contact lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk

New Style Employment and Support Allowance: Change to new claims telephone number

36. The telephone number to call to make a New Style Employment and Support Allowance new claims is changing. From 12 September 2022 the telephony number to call will be 0800 055 6688. This line will be open 8am to 5pm to align with Working Age.

37. This is a shared line, with New Style Employment and Support Allowance joining New Style Job Seekers Allowance and Maternity Allowance new claims. Once connected to the line, callers will be given all three options to choose from.

38. From 12 September, any calls made to the old number (0800 328 5644) will get a recorded message directing them to the new line.

39. The Benefit Enquiry line telephony number 0800 169 0310, remains unchanged and should be used for all enquires after a new claim has been made. Text, Relay UK and Welsh language line numbers also remain unchanged.

Managed move of claimants to Universal Credit: Discovery phase expands to Harrow and Northumberland

40. In April 2022, DWP announced plans to resume the programme to move all benefit claimants over to Universal Credit (UC) by 2024.

41. From 15 August 2022, we expanded our discovery phase to include Harrow. We will now expand our discovery phase to Northumberland from mid-September 2022.

42. During the discovery phase we will send a migration notice to a small number of claimants on legacy benefits to let them know that they need to move across to UC, explain how the process will work and what they will need to do.

43. Everyone moving over from legacy benefits as part of this process will have their entitlement to UC assessed against their current claims, with transitional protection provided for eligible claimants whose initial UC entitlement would have been less than their entitlement to legacy benefits at the point of moving to UC. These will continue unless their entitlement changes.

44. A dedicated helpline (signposted on the migration notice claimants receive) will provide support for people to make their UC claim, and guidance will also be available online including on the [Understanding Universal Credit \(https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/\)](https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/) website. Those in need of further support can also visit their local jobcentre.

45. Additional support remains available for those in need, including the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments.

HB decisions by the Upper Tribunal

46. Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) Leeds is not aware of any HB cases that have been decided by the Upper Tribunal (UT) since June's edition of this bulletin.

47. A selection of [decisions of the UT \(https://www.gov.uk/administrative-appeals-tribunal-decisions\)](https://www.gov.uk/administrative-appeals-tribunal-decisions) are published on their website. Do be aware that there is an undefined time lapse between decisions being issued and their appearance on the website.

48. If you have any queries about cases before the UT Judges or courts, please contact us by email at quarryhouse.dmaleedscustomersupportservices@dwp.gov.uk

New Legislation

49. The following Statutory Instrument (SI) has been laid:

- SI 2022/886 Universal Credit (Administrative Earnings Threshold) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, comes into force on 26 September 2022

50. Copies of SIs can now be downloaded from [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

What's new on our HB pages on www.gov.uk

51. The following items can be found on the website link shown:

Document Type	Subject	Link
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Document Type	Subject	Link
LAWD8/2022 bulletin	<p>Editorial</p> <p>Adult Disability Payment: Case transfer and IT changes</p> <p>Update: Employment and Support Allowance Underpayment/Incapacity Benefit reassessment corrective exercise Supported accommodation and temporary accommodation process guides</p> <p>The Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Amendment Regulations 2022</p> <p>Publication of the refreshed HB Subsidy Guidance Manual for financial year ending March 2022</p> <p>Invitation to a test and learn pilot: Email solution for Attendance Allowance form DBD68LA</p> <p>Publication of HB speed of processing statistics for January to March 2022</p> <p>Practitioners' Operational Group and LA Welfare Steering Group Secondment opportunities in LA-PED division</p> <p>HB Decisions by the Upper Tribunal</p> <p>New Legislation</p> <p>What's new on our HB pages on www.gov.uk</p>	<p>LAWD8/2022 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-dire)</p>

Document Type	Subject	Link
Circular HB S9/2022	Housing Benefit Subsidy - Mid-year Discretionary Housing Payments government contribution for English and Welsh local authorities for the financial year ending March 2023	HB S9/2022 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/benefit-subsidy-circulars-2022/s92022-mid-discretionary-housing-payments-governmer-contribution-for-english-and-welsh-local-aut-the-financial-year-ending-march-2)
Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IPS Launch Letter - IPSPC LA Grant Guidance - Appendix A – IPSPC Grant Application Instructions and Assessment Criteria - Appendix B – IPSPC Grant Application - Appendix C – IPSPC Profile Templates - Appendix D – Draft Management Information - Appendix E – Data - IPSPC – Annex D – Q&A 	Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care Initiative (https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/individual-placement-and-support-in-primary-care-initiative)

[↑ Back to top](#)

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