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Guidance

LA Welfare Direct 10/2022

Updated 10 October 2022



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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 and County Councils

Action

For information

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Editorial

Welcome to the October 2022 edition of the Local Authority Welfare Direct bulletin.

Since our last bulletin we've got a new Prime Minister in Liz Truss, shortly followed by a new King after the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. And, although as a country we paused whilst in mourning, work within the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division continues as I'm sure it did within your own councils. As my colleague Paul Selby said in his editorial last month "The work to support vulnerable local citizens never stops". We all know that only too well.

My team has been working hard to ensure that County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England have the correct information to allow them to start planning for the Household Support Fund 3, of which £421 million has been made available to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living, with the delivery period having started on 1 October 2022. There are some slight amends from the previous scheme and we hope we can work together to ensure authorities can support those most in need.

This month you will see information on the new Performance Measurement Housing Benefit (HB) annual work programme and the HB Cost Refresh exercise alongside some opportunities to attend various engagement events on HB Subsidy

as well as Data sharing and IT consultation forum. We know many of you already participate and volunteer to support us at events like these so thank you for your support and we hope you will find these and the other articles you will read useful.

Rebecca Bryning, Head of Local Authority Grants, LA-PED

Infected Blood Interim Compensation Scheme

1. On 17 August 2022 the government announced that [interim compensation payments \(https://www.gov.uk/government/news/infected-blood-victims-to-receive-100000-interim-compensation-payment\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/infected-blood-victims-to-receive-100000-interim-compensation-payment) of £100,000 will be made to infected persons and bereaved partners following the publication of Inquiry Chairman Sir Brian Langstaff's [interim report \(https://www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-07/Infected%20Blood%20Inquiry%20Interim%20Report.pdf\)](https://www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-07/Infected%20Blood%20Inquiry%20Interim%20Report.pdf) on 29 July 2022.
2. The payments will be made under a new UK-wide scheme called the Infected Blood Interim Compensation Payment Scheme, which is separate from and does not form a part of the 4 UK Infected Blood Support Schemes (UK IBSS). The Scheme will be administered on behalf of the UK Government by the four administrators of the UK IBSS.
3. One interim compensation payment of £100,000 will be paid to any living infected beneficiary or bereaved partner who was registered as of 29 July 2022 with any of the existing UK IBSS. Payment letters will start being sent out to beneficiaries from 14 October 2022 and payments should be received by the end of October 2022.
4. More information can be found at [Interim Payments Infected Blood Inquiry \(https://www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/interim-payments\)](https://www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/interim-payments)

Effect on Housing Benefit

5. These payments must be declared by recipients just like other payments made by the UK IBSS and disregarded for income and capital purposes. For more information about the UK IBSS see circular HB [A9/2017 \(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652798/a9-2017.pdf\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652798/a9-2017.pdf) and [G3/2017 \(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/636985/housing-benefit-circular-G3-2017.pdf\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/636985/housing-benefit-circular-G3-2017.pdf) bulletin.

Self-isolation Support Payment Scheme in Wales

6. As initially advised in [LAWD Lite 3/2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-lite-32022) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-lite-32022>) and further notified to local authorities (LAs) through Glasscubes on 13 September 2022, the Self-Isolation Support Payment Scheme ceased in Wales at the end of June 2022.

7. Subsequently, the 'SG_Get_Income_Information_Addon' role has been removed from Searchlight for Welsh LAs from 1 October 2022. Therefore, Welsh LAs can no longer access this information to process any residual claims or reviews.

8. If LAs have any questions regarding the removal of this role, they should email the LA Security and Support Team (LASST) at lawelfare.lasupport@dwp.gov.uk

Change to the LASST contact number

9. LASST is a dedicated team within the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division who deliver first line help-desk support to LAs.

10. The new dedicated telephone number for LAs to contact them if they have any urgent queries is 0300 092 0103.

11. Before contacting LASST please ensure you have checked the LASST current issues and FAQs (frequently asked questions) log on Glasscubes, as this may save you time and help resolve your query.

12. LAs can also contact the team by:

- emailing lawelfare.lasupport@dwp.gov.uk
- posting on Glasscubes to raise issues or ask for advice from other LAs that may be of interest to a wider audience

13. Enquiries are monitored by LASST during live operating hours:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 4:30pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4pm

New Verify Earnings and Pensions User Interface information

14. A new Verify Earnings and Pensions' (VEP) User Interface (UI) is due to be implemented and all LAs will go-live onto the new interface on Monday 10 October 2022.

15. To ensure compliance with accessibility standards, mandatory changes have been made to the VEP system which has resulted in a new UI. The new UI affects the front end with changes to the 'look' and 'feel'. Whilst the primary purpose was

to satisfy these standards, other improvements to enhance the user experience have also been included.

16. We wrote to all Revenue and Benefits managers on 7 September 2022 and included details of the planned 10 October 2022 all LA call and a mop-up call on 18 October 2022.

17. On 28 September 2022 we also issued the following directly to LA single inbox addresses:

- new updated VEP guidance (Topics 1 to 4 and Topic 5)
- log-in instructions (access to the new User Interface)
- frequently asked questions
- User Interface video

18. Do note, all the above documents can also be found on Glasscubes.

19. If you have any queries regarding the content of this article, contact vep.implementation@dwp.gov.uk

Performance Measurement Housing Benefit annual work programme due to commence

20. The new Performance Measurement Housing Benefit (HB) annual work programme is due to commence from 14 November 2022 and will end by 9 October 2023. Participation in the HB reviews is required to check and report levels of fraud and error found in HB. Data from the reviews will then be published in the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP's) May 2024 National Fraud and Error Statistics. Details of the work programme can be found in [Appendix A attached alongside this bulletin \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/appendix-a-la-welfare-direct-102022\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/appendix-a-la-welfare-direct-102022).

21. Owing to the declining Working Age caseload, the type of cases that Performance Measurement will sample in this work programme has changed from Standard Working Age to Pension Age Standard (1900 cases) and Pension Age non-standard (1100 cases). However, the way Performance Measurement carry out their review actions will remain unchanged.

22. Performance Measurement will continue with the important profile meetings, liaising with LAs single point of contact (SPOC) between 6 to 8 weeks prior to the sample being provided. These profile meetings allow LAs to update the information that Performance Measurement use and provide an opportunity for any queries to be discussed in relation to the transfer of electronic information and timeframes.

23. It is important to note that changes to the work programme can only be made in exceptional circumstances, such as during cyber-attacks on LA systems.

24. To help Performance Measurement keep SPOC details up to date, LAs should email any changes to their HB Manager's or HB Error Control Officer's contact details to quarryhouse.midlandsctgroupmailbox@dwp.gov.uk

25. Performance Measurement would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the ongoing support you provide that enables us to carry out the review activities so effectively.

Case transfers to Adult Disability Payment: 28-day period after hospital admissions

26. As advised in [LAWD8/2022 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-82022\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-82022), the case transfer from Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to Adult Disability Payment (ADP) began in August 2022.

27. ADP replaces PIP for Working Age adults in Scotland and is administered by Social Security Scotland.

28. ADP mirrors PIP in that both benefits are suspended 28 days after a claimant is admitted to hospital.

29. If a PIP claimant is in hospital at the point when they transfer to ADP, Social Security Scotland will restart the 28-day period at the point of case transfer, even where the claimant has been in hospital for 28 days or more.

Impact on LAs

30. This should have no impact on HB as the HB rules allow the award of Disability Premium, Enhanced Disability Premium or Severe Disability Premium to continue for up to 52 weeks when someone is in hospital even though PIP, ADP or Disability Living Allowance award is suspended after 28 days.

31. LAs will receive an Automated Transfer to LA Systems notification reporting the change in circumstance, alongside the new ADP award, as normal.

32. If you have any questions, contact lawelfare.laliaisonteam@dwp.gov.uk

HB Cost Refresh exercise

33. As detailed in [LAWD4/2022 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-42022\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-42022), in previous years DWP has carried out HB Cost Refresh exercises to help accurately calculate the costs of delivering HB and understand the levels of funding provided through HB Administration Subsidy (HBAS) and other new burdens to LAs.

34. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the latest data we hold is for the financial year ending (FYE) March 2019, so it is important that we update our data for FYE March 2023. The data this exercise provides could help inform future funding decisions and any reviews of HBAS allocation methodology.

35. To ensure the data accurately reflects the costs of delivering HB throughout Great Britain, we are seeking more LAs to get involved. We recognise that LAs' resources are stretched and, therefore, are committed to making the process as simple as possible.

36. If you think your LA may be in a position to participate and you would like more information about what this exercise involves, please contact us at lawelfare.lafunding@dwp.gov.uk by Friday 28 October 2022.

LA HB subsidy workshops in early 2023

37. During the first quarter of 2022 (January to March), the Local Authority Funding Team who sit within LA-PED held a number of HB subsidy workshops with those LA staff who are responsible for completing HB subsidy claim forms. The feedback from attendees was extremely positive. In order to help improve the customer journey the LA Funding Team are proposing to hold a further series of HB subsidy workshops which will be scheduled throughout January and February 2023.

38. The LA Funding Team plan to deliver these interactive workshops via MS Teams.

39. As in previous years, we intend to hold separate workshops for LA staff both new to the role and those more experienced in completing subsidy claims:

New to subsidy workshops

40. These workshops will provide an introduction to HB subsidy, with a particular focus on the arrangements for claiming and payment of subsidy as well as:

- applicable timelines LAs need to adhere to each financial year
- how estimates determine monthly subsidy payments
- growth factors, exceptions, and settlement of claims
- questions and answer session

41. Anyone wishing to attend one of these workshops should email an expression of interest to lawelfare.lapaymentsandsubsidy@dwp.gov.uk using 'New to HB subsidy' workshops 2023' as the subject heading.

Workshops for LA staff experienced in subsidy

42. It is intended that these workshops will firstly focus mainly on key issues that have been highlighted by LA staff during business as usual and raised in previous presentations and, secondly, a review of the error causes and associated good practices that could be aligned to reduce the reported error rates. Pre-submitted topics and subsidy issues will be built into the workshop presentation and discussed in an open forum session.

43. Key issues covered will include:

- HBAP workbooks
- sub populations
- CAKE (Cumulative Assurance Knowledge and Experience)
- temporary accommodation
- what is the impact of an error-extrapolation?
- Module X Further additional testing
- auditor relations

44. Anyone wishing to attend the experienced workshops should email an expression of interest to lawelfare.lapaymentsandsubsidy@dwp.gov.uk using 'Experienced in HB subsidy' workshops 2023' as the subject heading.

45. All expressions of interest should be emailed to us by 4 November 2022 at the latest if possible.

46. Additionally, it would be helpful if interested attendees could include any subsidy issues or areas of learning they would like to discuss in either workshop.

Invitation to the next Data sharing and IT consultation and engagement forum

47. The next forum will be held on Wednesday 9 November 2022 from 11am to midday.

Joining instructions

48. The joining instructions are:

- HB Administration Subsidy (HBAS) 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 dial-in so, if you anticipate having questions, we recommend joining through MS Teams where possible

- aim to join the event 2 or 3 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

Forum agenda

- a 15-minute introduction DWP, covering projects recently delivered, projects currently in delivery, insight into future planned projects, as well as the most recent common issues that have been reported to us
- 30 to 45 minutes of questions from LAs on the call about the projects and matters covered in the introduction and any other IT and data sharing questions and issues LAs may have.
- if time allows, 15 minutes focused on suggestions from LAs about future data sharing, data matching or automation projects that DWP could consider funding and delivering.

49. The call will be recorded and the recording will be published on Glasscubes.

50. The forum is open to all LAs and we would be beneficial for every LA to have at least 1 representative dial into the forum to help us maximise feedback. Each LA representative should:

- seek input and feedback from as many of their colleagues as possible prior to dialling in, for example, questions they might want answering
- have knowledge, at least at a high level, about data sharing, data matching and current IT topic areas
- feedback to their colleagues about how the conference call went, including the answers to the questions we asked

51. We look forward to your participation on the call. However, if you have any questions in the meantime, please contact paul.selby@dwp.gov.uk

Plans to issue the LA-PED division's bulletin to county councils

52. It has become apparent that county councils may benefit from receiving LA-PEDs Local Authority Welfare Direct (LAWD) bulletin.

53. So, we are going to trial sending the LAWD to all county councils also via each authority's single inbox address for the next 3 months (October to December 2022). We will review and seek feedback from them all in January 2023 as to how they receive this bulletin and, indeed, if they wish to continue receiving it.

54. If you have any questions about the content of this article, contact the LA Communications team at lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk

Practitioners' Operational Group and LA Welfare Steering Group

55. The last LA Welfare Steering Group (LAWSG) meeting took place on 15 September 2022. Agenda items included the LA Welfare issues Highlight Report, Move to Universal Credit and Cost of Living.

56. Both groups' meetings are held bi-monthly (and alternately), so the next Practitioners' Operational Group meeting is scheduled to take place on 13 October 2022.

57. If you have any questions regarding topics raised at these consultation groups, you can email lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk

Secondment opportunities in LA-PED division

58. Working with LAs, as one of our major stakeholders in Welfare Reform, continues to feature heavily and for this reason we value the expertise and knowledge that LA HB experts can bring to the team. These secondment opportunities provide an opportunity to gain an insight and experience of policy development and workings of central government.

59. LA-PED has had a programme of bringing HB experts from LAs in to work alongside data sharing, subsidy, change and performance teams on secondment. We are now looking to register your interest for further secondment opportunities over the coming months.

60. LA-PED comprises approximately 120 staff. The division is responsible for overseeing the performance of LAs in their delivery of HB. It monitors a range of performance data including how quickly and accurately HB is paid and the prevention and detection of fraud and error. LA-PED offers support and challenge to those LAs not meeting performance expectations.

61. It supports a large programme of data sharing activity that is paramount in helping LAs pay the correct amount of HB and is heavily involved in managing change activity supporting the Welfare Reform agenda.

62. It's also responsible for paying HB Administration Subsidy, Discretionary Housing Payments, New Burdens and additional grant funding.

63. This is an exciting opportunity to play a leading role in maintaining and improving stakeholder relationships between DWP and LAs and in designing innovative opportunities for closer working during this busy and complex period of

welfare reform.

Personal requirements

64. Candidates should possess the following:

- good understanding of HB procedures and regulations
- good drafting and communication skills
- ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with LAs and other stakeholders
- ability to work with people at different levels in the organisation and to work as part of a team to achieve results
- ability to deliver work at pace and with successful, quantifiable outcomes

Further information

65. Secondment posts would be offered for either 12 months or 24 months dependant on the role offered across the division. The posts would usually be full time and based across the country, although no moves at public expense would be considered. These opportunities will be determined by business need so your CV will be kept on file and you will be contacted once a suitable opportunity arises.

66. If you are keen to register your interest and are at S01/S02/SO3 and Pay Band level 4 or equivalent, (roughly equates to civil service HEO/SEO/G7 grades) please:

- check with your LA that you could be released, and then
- send your CV by email to laped.businesssupportteam@dwp.gov.uk

HB decisions by the Upper Tribunal

67. Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) Leeds is aware of the following HB case that has been decided by the Upper Tribunal (UT):

- UA-2019-001384-HB - UT Judge considered recent CJEU judgment in the case of VI v Commissioners for HM Revenue and Customs C-247/20 (“VI”), which decided that having access to the NHS is sufficient to satisfy the requirement to have comprehensive sickness insurance for the purposes of Article 7 of Directive 2004/38. The UT concluded that VI applied to the claimant and, as he was an

NHS patient for a significant period of time and did not claim any benefits, he should be considered as having acquired a permanent right to reside by the time of his claim to HB

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

69. 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

70. The following Statutory Instruments (SIs) have been laid:

- Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (Victims of Domestic Abuse and Victims of Modern Slavery) (Amendment) Regulations 2022. SI 2022/942, laid on 8 September 2022. Coming into force 1 October 2022
- Income-related Benefits (Subsidy to Authorities) Amendment Order 2022. SI 2022/983, laid on 23 September 2022. Coming into force 31 October 2022
- Social Security (Habitual Residence and Past Presence) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2022. SI 2022/990, laid on 27 September 2022. Coming into force 18 October 2022
- Social Security Additional Payments (Second Qualifying Day) Regulations 2022. SI 2022/1011, laid on 3 October 2022. Coming into force 24 October 2022

71. Copies of SIs can now be downloaded from [legislation.gov.uk \(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

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

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

Document Type	Subject	Link
LAWD9/2022	Editorial Reminder: How to complete the SHBE field on number of bedrooms for	LAWD9/2022 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-9202)

Document Type	Subject	Link
	<p>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 Earning and Pensions 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</p>	

Document Type	Subject	Link
	HB pages on GOV.UK (https://www.gov.uk/)	
Revised Circular HB A3/2022	Changes to supported housing and temporary accommodation Single Housing Benefit Extract management information	A3/2022 Revised (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2022/a32022-change-to-supported-housing-and-temporary-accommodation-single-housing-benefit-extract-management-information)
Circular HB A6/2022	The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (Victims of Domestic Abuse and Victims of Modern Slavery) Amendment Regulations 2022	A6/2022 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2022/a62022-the-housing-benefit-and-universal-credit-victims-of-domestic-abuse-and-victims-of-modern-slavery-amendment-regulations-2022)

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