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[Department
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Guidance

LA Welfare Direct lite 4/2023

Updated 20 April 2023

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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

Urgent reminder: Immediate notification of procurement of audit firm for the financial year ending March 2024 Housing Benefit Assurance Process (England only) required

1. As advised in [LAWD 12/2022 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-122022\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2022/la-welfare-direct-122022), as part of the standard engagement terms, each local authority (LA) was required to provide the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with notification confirming the procurement of a reporting accountant to carry out Housing Benefit Assurance Process (HBAP) testing in relation to financial year ending (FYE) March 2024 by no later than 1 March 2023.
2. Unfortunately, a number of LAs did not meet the standard deadline or contact the DWP to request and agree an extension.
3. Therefore, we ask that LAs who have not yet forwarded the required notification to DWP to do so immediately by email to lawelfare.hbassurance@dwp.gov.uk or contact us at the same email address to formally request an extension to the deadline. Any such request should include the current status of the procurement and detailed reasons for the delay.
4. The notification confirming the audit firm procurement should include the:
 - name of the audit firm
 - length of the contract
 - lead audit contact name
 - audit office location

5. Do note, if an LA secured a multi-year engagement with a reporting accountant that covers HBAP in respect of the FYE March 2023 and FYE March 2024 and previously notified DWP of that engagement, then further notification is not required.

Publication of refreshed HBAP modules for the FYE March 2023

6. DWP has recently refreshed and [published the following HBAP modules](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-assurance-process-hbap) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-assurance-process-hbap>) for the FYE March 2023:

- Module 1: DWP reporting framework instruction (in England), the Standard Engagement Terms for HBAP, including standard checks on the subsidy claim form and links to other modules
- Module 2: DWP benefit uprating checklist
- Module 6: Approach and testing strategy (in England), the detailed testing requirements which provide Reporting Accountants and LAs with instructions required by DWP to complete the HBAP

7. If you have any questions contact hb.assurancequeries@dwp.gov.uk
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