

Guidance

# LA Welfare Direct 7/2023

Updated 2 August 2023

[Contents](#)

[Contact](#)

[Who should read](#)

[Action](#)

[Editorial](#)

[Update: Transformation of the Single Housing Benefit Extract returns using a real time Application Programme Interface](#)

[SHBE Application Programme Interface pilot](#)

[National rollout next steps](#)

[Update: Care Homes Information Service](#)

[Update: Managed migration of Tax Credit claimants to Universal Credit](#)

[Practitioners' Operational Group and LA Welfare Steering Group](#)

[Secondment opportunities in the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division's Performance Development Team](#)

[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](mailto:lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk)

# Who should read

All Housing Benefit staff

# Action

For information

# Editorial

Welcome to the July 2023 edition of the Local Authority Welfare Direct bulletin.

I reflected in June on the work our Local Authority Analytical Team was focused on to support the Performance Development Team's discussions with local authorities (LAs) regarding the Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative management information (MI). We have collectively made excellent progress thanks to a collaborative approach with all involved, including valuable insights from LAs. The transformation of the SHBE (Single Housing Benefit Extract) returns featured in this edition will have an impact on how we deliver our analysis and MI in the future. We are already starting to consider this and plan our work. I do think this will bring improvements to our reporting and better inform future discussions with you all.

I'd like to draw your attention to the article on secondees – LA secondees bring valuable knowledge and experience to the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division and, whilst I fully appreciate LA colleagues continue to face resource and other pressures, it is a great opportunity for increasing all our learning and development. Please read the related article in full and register your interest.

One theme that stands out to me in reading this month's edition is the valuable input you all make in helping us deliver and improve – volunteering for the SHBE Application Programme Interface pilot and the Care Homes Information Service trial are just the current examples. I am always impressed by the high level of engagement and support shown consistently from local authorities and would like to thank you all for your continued hard work, ultimately striving to deliver an excellent service to our Housing Benefit claimants.

Finally, I hope you all manage to get some well-deserved time off over the summer to rest and recuperate and, hopefully, enjoy some nice weather. Enjoy your summer and take care everyone.

Tracy Williams

Head of Local Authority Funding, Analysis & Business Support, LA-PED

## **Update: Transformation of the Single Housing Benefit Extract returns using a real time Application Programme Interface**

1. As you know, the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division is working with your Housing Benefit (HB) IT software suppliers to transform the current four-weekly Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE) to automatically provide the HB data from local authority (LA) systems to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in real-time. This will increase the frequency in which the data will be sent to DWP and reduce the burden on LA administrative teams by removing the manual extraction, data checking, saving and exporting of the extract to DWP.

### **SHBE Application Programme Interface pilot**

2. Since the last update in [LAWD5/2023](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-52023>), we are pleased to confirm that the joint testing carried out by DWP and LA IT software suppliers of the SHBE Application Programme Interface (API) final solution has been successfully completed.
3. Following our request for LA volunteers and through working with LA IT software suppliers, we can confirm that we will be working with Chorley, Newham, Cambridge, Ashford, South Cambridgeshire, Durham, Gateshead, East Suffolk (who will be representing the Anglia Revenues Partnership), Clackmannanshire and Fife as early adopters in the SHBE API pilot.
4. DWP would like to take this opportunity to thank the LAs that contacted us and expressed an interest in supporting the pilot.
5. The pilot will be carried out over summer 2023. We will work with each LA early adopter and their IT software supplier to agree their start date. The aim is, through using live SHBE data, to gather feedback on each supplier's solution as well as collecting management information. The data collected will also enable DWP to confirm live support measures ahead of national rollout. To further aid LAs in their preparations, DWP will be issuing implementation guidance and a frequently asked questions guide nearer the time.
6. The feedback provided by the LA early adopters along with the outcomes will be crucial in helping identify any areas for improvement before national rollout.

# National rollout next steps

7. National rollout will take place using a staggered approach to accommodate the LA software supplier release schedules. In the run up to the national rollout your LA Revenues and Benefits teams will need to work closely with your IT teams to ensure they have the capacity to make the necessary system changes in autumn 2023. Further information will be provided following the initial outcomes from the pilot.

8. To reassure LAs, DWP has agreed that following implementation of the final solution, there will be a period of dual running to ensure the accuracy of data and address any issues which impact LA's performance measurement figures before switching off the existing solution.

9. If you need any further information, email [lawelfare.ladsdeliveryteam@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:lawelfare.ladsdeliveryteam@dwp.gov.uk)

## Update: Care Homes Information Service

10. Further to the article in May's LAWD5/2023 bulletin, we would like to thank all those LAs who have shown interest in our request for early adopters for the Care Homes Information Service (CHIS) early adopter trial. We have now started to engage with those volunteers.

11. The CHIS trial is progressing and has successfully moved into live data transfer with our first early adopter LA; providing data for permanent admissions and when a funding decision has been made. This data is being used by DWP Attendance Allowance agents to monitor how the solution is working.

12. LA and DWP agents' feedback and insights being provided throughout the trial is supporting the final solution design and we will provide further information on this and next steps in future LAWD bulletins.

13. In the meantime, if you would like any further information, email [lawelfare.ladsdeliveryteam@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:lawelfare.ladsdeliveryteam@dwp.gov.uk)

## Update: Managed migration of Tax Credit claimants to Universal Credit

14. The managed migration of Tax Credit claimants to Universal Credit (UC) continued its expansion (of Move to UC) last month into Greater Manchester and North East Yorkshire and the Humber.

15. In July, we are expanding Move to UC into Kent, North London, Durham, Tees Valley and East Anglia. In August, we will expand into West Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire, West Scotland and South London.

16. We continue to:

- collaborate with key external stakeholders to develop and improve the Move to UC journey. Recently, following stakeholder feedback on help making a claim to UC, we added Help to Claim and Advice Local references to the Migration Notice and continue to test the effectiveness of the information contained within the Notice
- work with smaller specialist groups of stakeholders, to gain their valuable insight into specific elements of the Move to UC approach. A recent example of this was a workshop to discuss our 'Discovery' plans to bring couples into the Move to UC journey

## **Practitioners' Operational Group and LA Welfare Steering Group**

17. The last Practitioners' Operational Group meeting took place on 22 June 2023. Agenda items included the LA Welfare issues Highlight Report, Move to UC, Pension Credit/HB trials and LA funding.

18. Both groups' meetings are held bi-monthly (and alternately), so the next LA Welfare Steering Group is scheduled to take place on 20 July 2023.

19. If you have any questions regarding topics raised at these consultation groups, you can email [lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk)

## **Secondment opportunities in the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division's Performance Development Team**

20. 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 those administering HB within LAs can bring.

21. The Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division has had a very successful programme of bringing HB experts from LAs in to work alongside data sharing, subsidy, change and performance teams on secondment.

22. We are now looking for LA secondees to join our Performance Development (PDT) team.

23. PDT comprises of business consultants and performance relationship managers (PRMs), who have many years of experience and expertise of working with central and local government to deliver sustainable improvements in performance.

24. The consultancy and PRM roles offer a wide variety of working experiences. However, they complement each other and come together when supporting HB

performance.

25. Continuous improvement is central to the work we deliver and our aim is to transfer our skills and knowledge to our clients. We work collaboratively with LAs to help them evaluate their processes, identify efficiencies and improve service delivery.

26. Through our long history of secondees joining our team, we have gained a deeper understanding of what life is like within an LA HB service. This has helped us shape how we deliver our performance management and how we best support all 350 LAs. In turn LA secondees have seen their own knowledge of the HB landscape widen.

## **What desirable skills are we looking for?**

- strong stakeholder engagement/management with the ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with LAs and other stakeholders
- good drafting and communication skills
- competent excel skills – enjoys working with and analysing management information
- enjoys managing competing priorities

27. We understand the fast-paced, ever-changing environment LA secondees come from, and we want to continue this exciting learning journey together. These opportunities are ideally suited to those with a good understanding of HB procedures and who want to gain an insight into central government whilst learning new skills in a busy and supportive workplace.

## **Further information**

28. Secondment posts would be offered for either 12 months or 24 months depending on the role. Both the consultancy and PRM roles require some travel and overnight stays but is more frequent for the consultancy role.

29. The posts would usually be full time and based across the country; to give you an idea, we have hub locations in Blackpool, Glasgow, Leeds, London, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield. No moves at public expense would be considered.

30. If you are keen to register your interest and your current salary is in the region of National £34,173 to £41,480 or London £37,520 to £45,919 (which roughly equates to civil service HEO/SEO grades), please check with your LA you can be released and send your CV by email to [laped.businesssupportteam@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:laped.businesssupportteam@dwp.gov.uk)

## **HB decisions by the Upper Tribunal**

31. Decision Making and Appeals Leeds have not been made aware of any new HB decisions by the Upper Tribunal since May's edition of this bulletin.

32. 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.

33. If you have any queries about cases before the UT Judges or courts, please contact us by email at [quarryhouse.dmaleedscustomersupportservices@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:quarryhouse.dmaleedscustomersupportservices@dwp.gov.uk)

## New Legislation

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

- 2023 No. 0000 The Pensions Dashboards (Amendment) Regulations 2023, made on 8 June 2023
- 2023 No. 640 Social Security (Income and Capital Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations 2023, made on 14 June 2023
- 2023 No. 664 Scotland Act 2016 (Social Security) (Disability Living Allowance) (Amendment) Regulations 2023, made on 16 June 2023

35. 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 \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-benefit-information-guidance-and-good-practice-for-local-authority-staff\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-benefit-information-guidance-and-good-practice-for-local-authority-staff).

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

Document Type	Subject	Link
LAWD6/2023 bulletin	Editorial Housing Benefit Subsidy guidance manual 2022 to 2023 Final deadline extension: Two local authority surveys to	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-62023">LAWD6/2023 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-62023)</a>



Document Type	Subject	Link
	<p>support new research into the supported housing sector</p> <p>Publication of HB speed of processing statistics for October to December 2022</p> <p>Practitioners' Operational Group and LA Welfare Steering Group</p> <p>Update: Move to UC</p> <p>HB Decisions by the Upper Tribunal</p> <p>New Legislation</p> <p>What's new on our HB pages on <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a></p>	
LAWD6/2023 Lite bulletin	<p>Future Support Offer 2024 grant competition</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-lite-62023">LAWD6/2023Lite</a> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-lite-62023">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-lite-62023</a>)</p>
HB subsidy circular S8/2023	<p>Additional New Burdens funding to meet the costs of recording Adult Disability Payment awards on Housing</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-subsidy-circulars-2023/s82023-additional-new-burdens-funding-to-meet-the-costs-of-recording-adult-disability-payment-awards-on-housing-benefit-systems">Circular HB S8/2023</a> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-subsidy-circulars-2023/s82023-additional-new-burdens-funding-to-meet-the-costs-of-recording-adult-disability-payment-awards-on-housing-benefit-systems">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-subsidy-circulars-2023/s82023-additional-new-burdens-funding-to-meet-the-costs-of-recording-adult-disability-payment-awards-on-housing-benefit-systems</a>)</p>

Document Type	Subject	Link
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	Benefit systems	
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[↑ Back to top](#)

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