

Guidance

A3/2024: Valuation of capital assets

Updated 26 March 2024

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2024/a32024-valuation-of-capital-assets>

Who should read

All Housing Benefit staff

Action

For information

Subject

Valuation of capital assets

Guidance Manual

The information in this circular does affect the content of the HB/CTB Guidance Manual. Please annotate this circular number against:

- BW1 Paras W1.380 – W1.484, Annex D and Annex E
- BP1 paras P1.380 – P1.484, Annex D and Annex E

Queries

You can get [extra copies of this circular/copies of previous circulars](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-for-local-authorities-circulars) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-for-local-authorities-circulars>).

If you need to ask about the new layout of this circular, contact: lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk

If you need to ask about the distribution of this circular, contact: lawelfare.correspondence@dwp.gov.uk

For queries about the technical content of this circular, contact: internationalaccessto.benefitpolicyteam@dwp.gov.uk

Appendix A: [Valuation of interest in property or land LA1 form \(claimant use\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2024) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2024>)

Appendix B: [Valuation of interest in property or land LA2 form \(LA use\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2024) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2024>).

Introduction

1. This circular updates circular HB A25/2009 and:

- introduces the revised Valuation of interest in property or land LA1 form (claimant use) and the Valuation of interest in property or land LA2 form (LA use)
- clarifies the arrangements for completing both forms
- advises on the future discontinuation of paper versions of the forms

Current Service Level Agreement

2. The current Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), which undertakes valuations of property and other capital assets, commenced on 1 September 2018 and is reviewed yearly. The agreement is monitored by DWP's Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division (LA-PED).

Revised forms LA1 and LA2

3. The previous versions of the LA1 and LA2 forms were not suitable for use with accessibility software. Therefore, the forms have been revised to make them fully accessible.

4. The revised forms are attached as a separate [appendices A and B in PDF format \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2024\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2024). LAs should not redesign or adapt the forms before submitting them to VOA.

Discontinuing of paper versions of forms LA1 and LA2

5. From 1 October 2024 paper LA1 and LA2 forms will be discontinued and should be destroyed from this date by every LA. Any paper copies received from this date will be destroyed by VOA. LAs seeking VOA progress on these paper forms will be advised to complete an electronic version.

6. VOA will operate dual running with electronic and paper versions of forms LA1 and LA2 until 30 September 2024 to ensure no valuation case requests are missed. However, the VOA's preferred method of receiving the LA1 and LA2 forms is by email (not by post).

Completion of forms LA1 and LA2

8. Local authorities (LAs) should ensure that in all instances when sending the forms to VOA, both forms are sent together within the same email. Any clerical LA1 forms completed by the claimant will therefore need to be scanned by the LA to enable them to be emailed.

9. LAs should ensure that form LA2 is fully completed with an email address for VOA to return the valuation to as valuations will no longer be posted back to the LA.

10. Completed forms should be emailed to dwpvaluations@voa.gov.uk

Valuation dates

11. A maximum of three valuation dates can be requested per form LA2. Additional forms must be submitted if more than three valuation dates are required.

Authorisation

12. LAs must ensure each form contains a case reference number and is signed by the appropriate officer. An electronic signature is acceptable.

Overseas valuations

13. The current contract with VOA does not extend to the valuation of overseas property. There are currently no plans to change this. Therefore, forms LA1 or LA2 should not be completed in respect of overseas valuations.

14. The value of overseas assets depends on whether any currency restrictions are in place in the country concerned. If there are no currency restrictions, the value of the asset is what a buyer would pay the seller.

15. The onus is on the claimant to provide this information, although there may be occasions when they cannot due to language barriers or the circumstances under which they left their country. LAs should obtain as much information as possible about the property (for example when it was purchased, whether there is any outstanding mortgage, details of anyone living in the property and of any estate agent who deals with properties abroad).

16. Most claimants can provide:

- a letter from a bank in the country where their asset(s) is held, or
- a letter from the embassy of the country where their asset(s) is held.

17. If the claimant cannot get any evidence to indicate the value, the decision maker must decide whether to accept the claimant's statement of the value. It is not the intention for the claimant to incur costs in this process.

Fraud cases

18. Colleagues are reminded that the guidance in the HB/CTB Guidance Manual does not deal with valuations in fraud cases.

19. If a potential Housing Benefit (HB) Fraud is identified during routine local authority HB administration, the HB processor should complete the Single Fraud Investigation (SFI) Form and send to the appropriate DWP inbox. All other potential Housing Benefit Fraud should be reported online at [Report benefit fraud - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\) \(https://www.gov.uk/report-benefit-fraud\)](https://www.gov.uk/report-benefit-fraud)

Disputed valuation

20. If a claimant disputes a valuation and the matter is referred to an appeal tribunal or a court hearing, the LA should obtain a follow-up report from VOA. Disputed valuations should not progress as far as an appeal tribunal, or a court hearing based on the valuation advice contained in form LA2 alone. Note: LAs should not direct claimants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their valuation to VOA directly.

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