

LA Welfare Direct 3/2025

Introduction

Various updates and

Bulletin Content:

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Reminder: Capital disregards for claimants fleeing domestic violence

1. Housing Benefit (HB) disregards the capital value of the home that the claimant normally lives in. If a claimant owns a property in which they don't live, any equity is normally treated as capital.
2. However, where someone flees their home due to fear of violence and intends to return, the effect of the temporary absence rules mean that they are treated as living in their normal home for a period of up to 12 months. As the claimant is considered remaining in their normal home, the capital value of that home remains disregarded during this period of temporary absence.
3. This capital disregard enables those fleeing violence to claim HB for alternative accommodation without the capital value of their normal home preventing access to housing costs support, providing they will be returning to their home when it is safe to do so.
4. If you have any questions regarding the content of this article, please email housing.policyenquiries@dwp.gov.uk

HB debt recovered by the Department for Work and Pensions' Debt Management: Payment schedule retention period

5. Each month, Debt Management issue local authorities (LAs) with a schedule of deductions summarising recoveries made on an individual case basis through the automated interface. This is known as a payment schedule and the cumulative sum is then paid into the LAs bank account.
6. LAs receive their HB payment schedules through Transfer Your File (TYF) by the third Friday of the month after the recovery from the claimant's benefit in the previous calendar month but, in exceptional circumstances, it could be the fourth Friday in a month.
7. LAs must have a local process in place to ensure payment schedules are downloaded from TYF within 30 days and should make provision for resilience to deal with unplanned staff absences within the download role.
8. Currently, in exceptional circumstances, LAs can request copies of payment schedules. However, in line with the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP's) retention policy, from 1 March 2025 a retention period will be set for a period of one year in which an LA can request copies of their payment schedules. There will be no exceptions for copies to be requested outside this one year period.
9. If you have any queries, contact lawelfare.lasupport@dwp.gov.uk

All LA HB Award Accuracy and Verify Earnings and Pensions Initiatives conference call on 18 March 2025

10. As detailed in the HB Award Accuracy (HBAA) Initiatives launch letter for the financial year ending (FYE) March 2026 (sent to Chief Finance Officers and Revenues and Benefits managers on 21 February 2025), this is to remind LAs that the 'All LA HBAA and Verify Earnings and Pensions (VEP) initiatives conference call' will take place on Tuesday 18 March 2025 from 10.30am until 12 noon.

11. During the call we will look to prepare LAs for the relaunch of the HBAA Initiative from April 2025 and provide an overview of the expectations as well as an opportunity for questions. We will also be explaining the funding and performance expectations of HB Matching Service referrals and VEP for the FYE March 2026. Therefore, all LAs are encouraged to attend.

Joining instructions

The joining instructions are:

- Note: The MS Teams link to this meeting has been shared in the version of the LAWD2/2025 that was sent directly to each LA's single inbox - 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.
- To prevent any capacity issues, we would ask that no more than 2 representatives from an LA join the call.

12. If you have any queries regarding the HBAA Initiative or VEP, or wish to discuss the exceptional reasons why your LA may not be able to participate in the HBAA Initiative, you can email lawelfare.frauderrordebt@dwp.gov.uk

Update: Pension Age Disability Payment and Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance managed case transfers and pilot

13. In [LAWD 11/2024](#), we advised LAs that Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP) and Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance (SADLA) were introduced in October 2024. For those in Scotland, PADP replaces Attendance Allowance and SADLA replaces Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

14. From spring 2025, claimants will be progressively transferred over to PADP or SADLA, depending on whether they receive Attendance Allowance

or DLA. LAs will begin to receive notifications about transferred PADP cases in late March 2025 and in late April 2025 for SADLA cases.

15. Eligible claimants in Scotland can make new applications for PADP. However, SADLA is a closed benefit and only those Pension age claimants currently in receipt of DLA will receive it, once their case has been transferred to Social Security Scotland.

16. Once a claim has been selected for transfer, the claimant will receive a letter from DWP to let them know that their claim is being transferred to Social Security Scotland. The letter will tell the claimant when their Attendance Allowance or DLA award ends.

17. Social Security Scotland will then send the claimant a welcome letter which will explain what will happen next and when they will transfer over.

18. DWP will continue to pay an Attendance Allowance or DLA award until the claim is transferred to Social Security Scotland. There will be no break in payment during the transfer.

Impact on LAs

19. For HB purposes, PADP and SADLA are treated in the same way as Attendance Allowance and DLA. LAs should continue to follow business as usual processes when a claim is transferred. Since there will no break in entitlement between awards, premiums on HB will also continue without any gap.

20. We are revising the single point of contact (SPOC) process, which we use to inform LAs about awards before we introduce data sharing.

21. Instead of the email-only solution currently in use, we will now collate any new claims or transferred cases and share these in the 'AD-HOC-IN' folder of TYF for affected LAs. We will send these files weekly and notify LAs they are available to download using the SPOC email addresses provided. This will be used for both new claims and case transfers.

22. We will issue further communications on the IT data sharing in a subsequent LAWD bulletin.

Reminder on PADP pilot phases and national rollout

23. As a reminder, those living in the following areas have been able to make new applications for PADP since 21 October 2024:

- Aberdeen City
- Argyll and Bute
- Highland
- Orkney
- Shetland

24. The second pilot phase commences on 24 March 2025, when those in the following areas will also be able to make new claims to PADP:

- Aberdeenshire
- Angus
- Clackmannanshire
- Dundee City
- East Ayrshire
- Falkirk
- Fife
- Moray
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- North Ayrshire
- Perth and Kinross
- South Ayrshire
- Stirling

25. Applications will open to every area from 22 April 2025.

26. If you have any questions, contact lawelfare.changemanagementoffice@dwp.gov.uk

Housing policy enquiries

27. This is a reminder that LA requests for help or advice about HB policy should be sent direct to Housing Policy Division's enquiry email address which is housing.policyenquiries@dwp.gov.uk

28. Sending requests for help or advice about HB policy to the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division, Universal Credit (UC) Partnership Managers or the UC Stakeholder division, will result in a delay in Housing Policy Division receiving your enquiry and providing advice.

Update: UC data sharing

UC – Local Council Tax Reduction data feed enhancements implementation update

29. As advised in [LAWD2/2025](#), we continue with our agreed rollout schedule of the fully enhanced version 2 files to coincide with software suppliers' latest releases that take advantage of all the changes.

30. Capita - following the successful go-live of 5 test LAs that use Capita software, version 2 files were released to all Capita using LA sites from 25 February 2025.

31. Civica - As planned, we met with test LAs that use Civica to discuss feedback from testing of the supplier's latest software release. We will meet again to get feedback and agree the date to release version 2 files to all Civica LAs. We are on track to complete the version 2 release implementation in March 2025.

32. The team strongly welcomes feedback on its communications as well as the enhancements it has made to the Local Council Tax Reduction data feed, including LA experiences of testing and going live. We aim to continually improve the associated technical guidance document and other communications, based on this feedback. So, please tell us what we're getting right and what would help make things better by emailing lawelfare.datasharingtransformation@dw.gov.uk

Additional UC information on Searchlight

33. In LAWD2/2025, we advised that we were aiming to complete the building and testing of the first iteration of additional UC information on Searchlight in order to release it to users by 3 April 2025. In fact, this is the date by which 'out of office hours' user testing is planned to take place. If successful, all users will access the enhanced service on 4 April 2025.

34. The build is complete and the UC and Searchlight teams are rigorously testing the enhanced data share.

35. We continue to demonstrate designs and builds to our working group of LAs for this current and future iterations, enabling us to co-design the changes with authority practitioners.

Identifying Local Vulnerability data sharing working group

36. We advised in LAWD2/2025 that we concluded our series of face-to-face and virtual workshops in January 2025. The team is now considering next steps, including whether another workshop is needed.

37. In the meantime, the Local Authority Data Sharing Transformation team are still engaged in work to conclude the discovery phase, so that they can build prototype

data shares and test assumptions before designing and building a minimum viable product.

38. We will continue to provide updates on progress in these 3 areas of data sharing through this LAWD bulletin. In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact lawelfare.datasharingtransformation@dwp.gov.uk

Have your say on the future of supported housing

39. As [announced](#) on 12 February 2025, the government has now published their consultation on the measures arising from the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.

40. The [public consultation](#) opened on 20 February 2025 and will close on 15 May 2025.

41. As LAs, you will know the importance of supported housing in providing care, support and supervision to some of the most vulnerable in society. As trusted partners who deliver HB and understand the communities you serve, it is crucial that we hear your views on the proposals.

42. Part one of the consultation contains policy proposals for implementing the measures in the Act, which apply in England. These measures include the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) led licensing regime for supported housing and new National Supported Housing Standards.

43. Part two of the consultation invites views on potentially linking HB to the licensing regime in England, to new or existing frameworks in Scotland and Wales and defining care, support and supervision in HB regulations in England, Scotland and Wales.

44. From March 2025, officials from the MHCLG and DWP are available to answer your questions and plan to deliver a series of focus groups. Contact supportedhousingconsultations@communities.gov.uk if you have any questions.

45. Both departments look forward to reviewing all responses once the consultation has closed. Please feel free to share the link with others that you think would be interested in this consultation.

Publication of HB speed of processing statistics for July to September 2024

46. The department published the [HB speed of processing statistics and associated data for quarter 2 \(Q2\) of the financial year ending \(FYE\) March 2025](#) on Wednesday 29 January 2025.

Some key points

- During the latest quarter there were 100,000 new claims processed. This comprises:
 - 76,000 (72%) for Working Age claimants
 - 29,000 (28%) for Pension age claimants
- Overall, this is an increase of 1,900 (2%) since last quarter and an increase of 3,100 (3%) when compared to a year earlier
- During the latest quarter there were 1.2 million changes of circumstances for existing HB claims processed. This comprises:
 - 810,000 (*69%) for Working Age claimants
 - 280,000 (*24%) for Pension age claimants
- Overall, this is a decrease of 260,000 (18%) since last quarter and an increase of 110,000 (11%) when compared to a year earlier
 - Do note, the volumes for Working Age and Pension age cases do not sum to the total volume for processed cases. The remaining 7% could not be matched to Searchlight to extract missing date of birth and sex of claimant information.

New claims

- The average time taken to process an HB new claim during the latest quarter was 21 calendar days. This is the same as last quarter and 1 day higher than a year earlier and comprises an average time of:
 - 19 days for Working Age claimants
 - 24 days for Pension age claimants

Change of circumstances

- The average number of days taken to process a change of circumstances to an existing HB claim during the latest quarter was 8 calendar days. This is the same as last quarter and 1 day lower than a year earlier and comprises an average time of:
 - 8 days for Working age claimants
 - 11 days for Pension age claimants

Practitioners' Operational Group and LA Welfare Steering Group

47. The last Practitioners' Operational Group meeting took place on 20 February 2025. Agenda items included bringing the administration together for HB and Pension Credit, LA funding, Move to UC, Cost of Living and supported housing.

48. Both groups' meetings are held bi-monthly (and alternately), so the next LA Welfare Steering Group meeting is scheduled to take place on 20 March 2025.

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

Update: Move to UC

50. Tax credits are closing on 5 April 2025, and claimants must respond to their migration notices by their deadline date to continue to receive financial support from the government. DWP continues to increase the number of migration notices being sent to claimants receiving Employment Support Allowance, with all notices due to be sent by the end of 2025.

51. The department recognises that some tax credit claimants may wait until their deadline to claim UC. For those who have a deadline date close to the tax credit closure date, we want to ensure that we provide as much support as possible and are therefore opening our Move to UC Helpline on Saturday 5 April 2025 to answer any questions.

52. The end of March 2025 marks the closure of the UC Programme and its transition from delivering 'Move to UC' from a Programme-led approach to a 'business as usual' operation.

Cases with the Upper Tribunal

53. DMA Leeds have not been made aware of any new HB cases that have been decided by the Upper Tribunal (UT).

HB cases awaiting decision by the UT

54. Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) Leeds have not been made aware any HB cases that are awaiting decision by the UT.

New Legislation

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

- 2025 No. 103 – The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling) Order 2025, made on 30 January 2025
- 2025 No. 117 – The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Regulations 2025, made on 4 February 2025
- 2025 No. 118 – The Lancashire Combined County Authority Regulations 2025, made on 4 February 2025
- 2025 No. 131 – The Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 (Commencement No. 3) Regulations 2025, made on 6 February 2025
- 2025 No. 144 – The Social Security (Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations 2025, made on 10 February 2025
- 2025 No. 188 – The Armed Forces Pensions (Remediable Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2025, made on 18 February 2025
- 2025 No. 199 – The Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) (Amendment) Regulations 2025, made on 20 February 2025
- 2025 No. 207 – The Child Benefit and Guardians Allowance (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2025, made on 24 February 2025
- No 227 – The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 (Disability Assistance) (Consequential Amendments) Order 2025, made on 27 February 2025
- 2025 No. 229 – The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 (Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance) (Consequential Amendments) (No. 2) Order 2025, made on 27 February 2025

56. Copies of SIs can now be downloaded from legislation.gov.uk

What's new on our [HB pages](#)

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

Document Type	Subject	Link
LAWD bulletin	Editorial – Annual uprating for the financial year ending March 2026 –The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 – New Housing Benefit Matching Service Rule: Do not Redirect for overseas addresses only – Changes to HBMS Rule HBUC007 – Latest update: Progress on removing LAs reliance on the Public Service Network – Update: UC data sharing – Invitation to the next Data sharing and IT consultation and engagement forum – Practitioners' Operational Group and LA Welfare Steering Group – HB Decisions by the Upper Tribunal – New Legislation – What's new on our HB pages on www.gov.uk	LAWD2/2025
Adjudication and operations circular	War Pensions uprating for the FYE March 2026	A2/2025
Adjudication and operations circular	The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2025 and The Social Security (Income and Capital Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations 2025	A3/2025
Adjudication and operations circular	The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 (Disability Assistance) (Consequential Amendments) Order 2024	A4/2025