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DWP HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT STATISTICS

Introduction

This is the first set of statistics that the Department will publish from the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE).

The statistics are a reinstatement of an existing National Statistics series and are the first release of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit caseload statistics since August 2008, which contained data to August 2007.

This first release focuses on figures for the latest available month, May 2009. More detailed tables containing monthly figures between November 2008 and May 2009, and including caseload and average amount figures broken down by Local Authority, tenancy type, passported benefit, and broad age group (working age / elderly) are released as Excel tables to accompany this release at the link below.

In addition, also to accompany this release, experimental statistics on recipients moving on to and off from (known as 'flows') Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit are released at the link below.

The main findings from the publication:

- At May 2009, the total number of people claiming Housing Benefit was 4.40 million, with 5.43 million claiming Council Tax Benefit.
- 2.85 million Housing Benefit recipients were of working-age, representing almost two thirds of all Housing Benefit recipients.
- One third of Housing Benefit claimants were Local Authority tenants at May 2009.
- Over two thirds of both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit recipients are in receipt of a Passported Benefit.
- There is wide Local Authority variation in both Housing Benefit recipients and Council Tax Benefit recipients as a proportion of Households, ranging from 5.9 per cent to 41.9 per cent for Housing Benefit, and 7.8 per cent to 39.9 per cent for Council Tax Benefit.
- The overall average Housing Benefit award is £81.03 per week, and for Council Tax Benefit recipients, the overall average award was £15.60 per week

Further information and detailed tables can be viewed at:

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb_ctb/hbctb_arc.asp



Table 1: Housing Benefit (HB) / Council Tax Benefit (CTB) recipients: May 2009

	All HB recipients		All CTB recipients	
	Number	Average Award	Number	Average Award
TOTAL	4,403,980	£81.03	5,428,230	£15.60
Passported Benefit				
In receipt of JSA (IB), IS, ESA (IB), PC (GC)	3,040,810	£84.72	3,726,500	£16.57
Not in receipt of JSA (IB), IS, ESA (IB), PC (GC)	1,336,440	£72.65	1,660,980	£13.44
Unknown	26,730	-		-
Tenancy Type				
Local Authority Tenants	1,496,040	£68.21		
Non Local Authority Tenants	2,879,400	£87.49		
Registered Social Landlord Tenants	1,672,090	£75.49		
Private Regulated Tenants	53,900	£73.13		
Private Deregulated Tenants				
<i>Local Housing Allowance Tenants</i>	674,930	£109.13		
<i>Non-Local Housing Allowance Tenants</i>	476,190	£100.49		
Other Private Tenants	2,290	£99.23		
Unknown	28,540	-		
Client Group				
Working Age	2,854,230	£87.38	2,822,800	£15.45
Elderly	1,522,930	£69.15	2,564,580	£15.77
Unknown	26,820	-	40,850	-

Notes

1. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit recipients are individual claimants who had a live in payment claim on Thursday 14th May. Council Tax Benefit recipients exclude Second Adult Rebate cases.
2. Passported Benefit and Tenancy Type breakdowns are as recorded within the Local Authorities Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit administration systems.
3. Client Group breakdown is derived from a combination of information on passported benefit and recipient's age.
4. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Components may not sum to total due to independent rounding.
5. Average award figures are shown as pounds per week and rounded to the nearest penny.
6. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Tenants may include a small number of non-LHA cases making a new claim since 6 April 2008. This will include recipients in caravan accommodation.

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

Housing Benefit Recipients

At May 2009, the total number of people claiming Housing Benefit was 4.40 million, a rise of 2.5 per cent over the quarter. Over two thirds of Housing Benefit recipients are in receipt of a Passported Benefit.

2.85 million Housing Benefit recipients were of working-age, representing almost two thirds of all Housing Benefit recipients. This group has seen a steady increase since November 2008 (8.2 per cent) and is consistent with the increase in the number of working-age people claiming key out-of-work benefits. The number of working-age people claiming key out of work benefits now totals 5.80 million claimants.

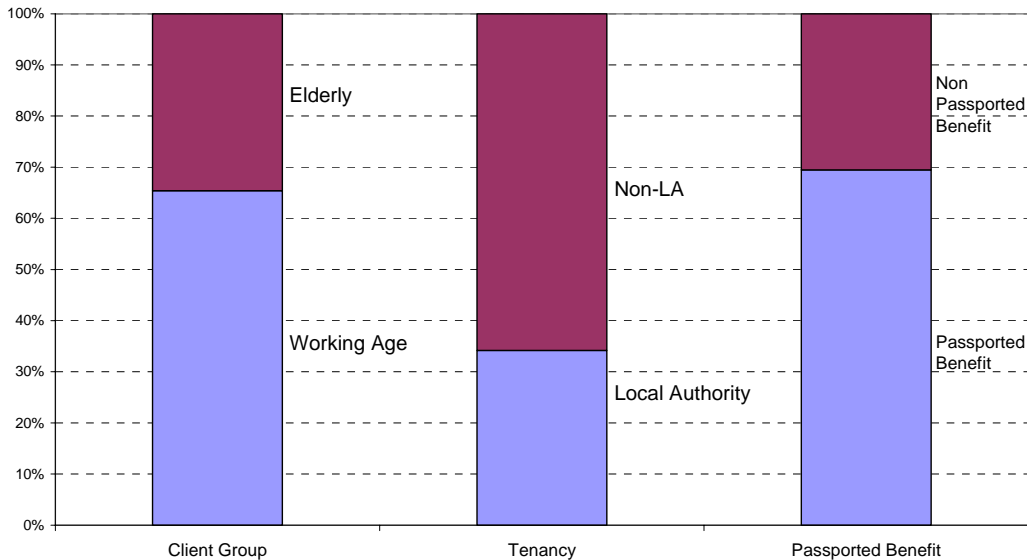


One third of Housing Benefit claimants were Local Authority Tenants at May 2009, continuing a downward trend in the quarter. This reflects a continuation of the transfer of Local Authority housing stock out of Local Authorities. Amongst non Local Authority Tenants the Registered Social Landlord sector is now the largest group amongst Housing Benefit recipients, although the proportion of Housing Benefit recipients in the Private Deregulated Sector has seen largest increase over the quarter.

Chart 1 below provides a breakdown of Housing Benefit recipients, at May 2009.

Chart 1

Breakdown of HB Recipients, May 2009



There is wide Local Authority variation in Housing Benefit recipients as a proportion of Households, ranging from 5.9 per cent to 41.9 per cent (chart 3).

The overall average Housing Benefit award is £81.03 per week, and the difference in entitlement between Local Authority tenants and non-Local Authority tenants is £19.28 per week on average. Amongst Private Deregulated Tenants, recipients of Local Housing Allowance have an average entitlement of £109.13 per week, an average of £8.64 more per week than non-Local Housing Allowance recipients.

Council Tax Benefit Recipients

At May 2009, the total number of people claiming Council Tax Benefit was 5.43 million, representing a rise of 2.4 per cent over the quarter.

2.82 million Council Tax Benefit recipients were of working-age, representing just over half of all Council Tax Benefit recipients. This group has seen a steady increase since November 2008 (8.5 per cent) and is consistent with the increase in the number of working-age people claiming key out-of-work benefits. The number of elderly Council Tax Benefit recipients has remained steady since November 2008.

Over two-thirds of Council Tax Benefit recipients had a Passported Benefit.

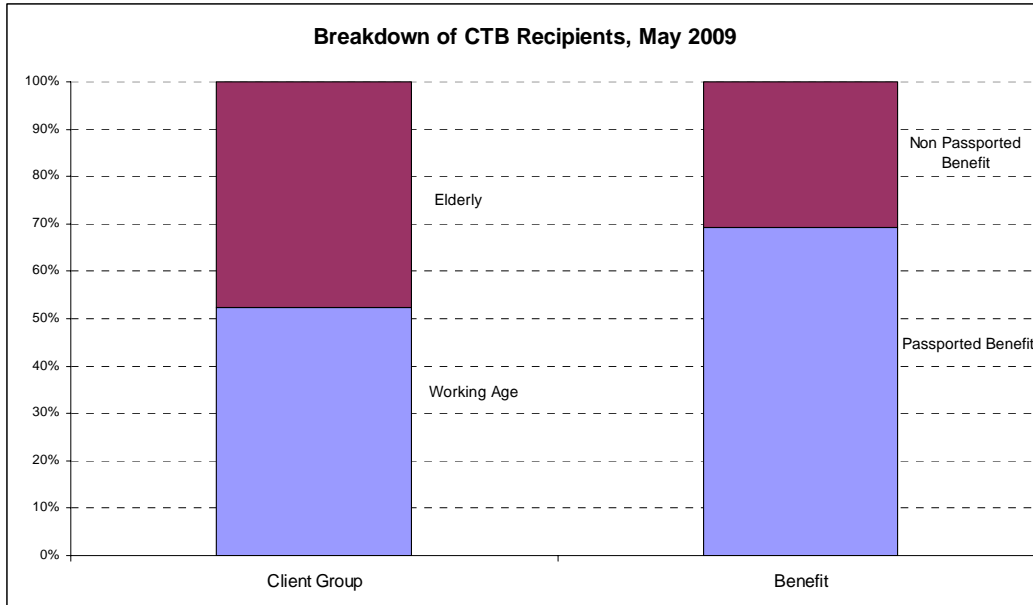
For Council Tax Benefit recipients, the overall average entitlement at May 2009 was £15.60 per week. Recipients with a Passported Benefit have an average weekly entitlement of £3.13 per week more than recipients not on a Passported Benefit.

There is wide Local Authority variation in Council Tax Benefit recipients as a proportion of Households, ranging from 7.8 per cent to 39.9 per cent (chart 4).

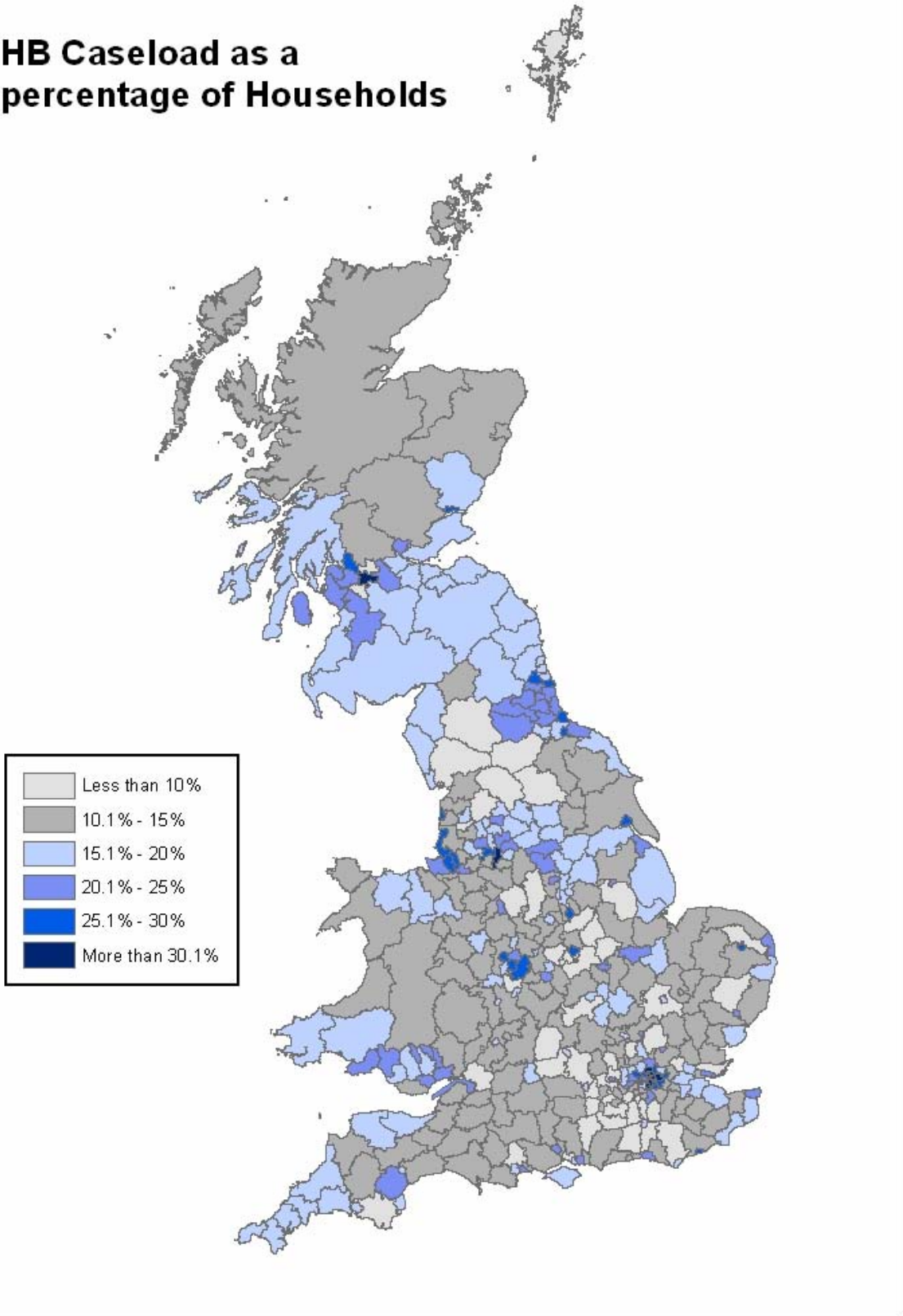


Chart 2 below provides a breakdown of Council Tax Benefit recipients, at May 2009.

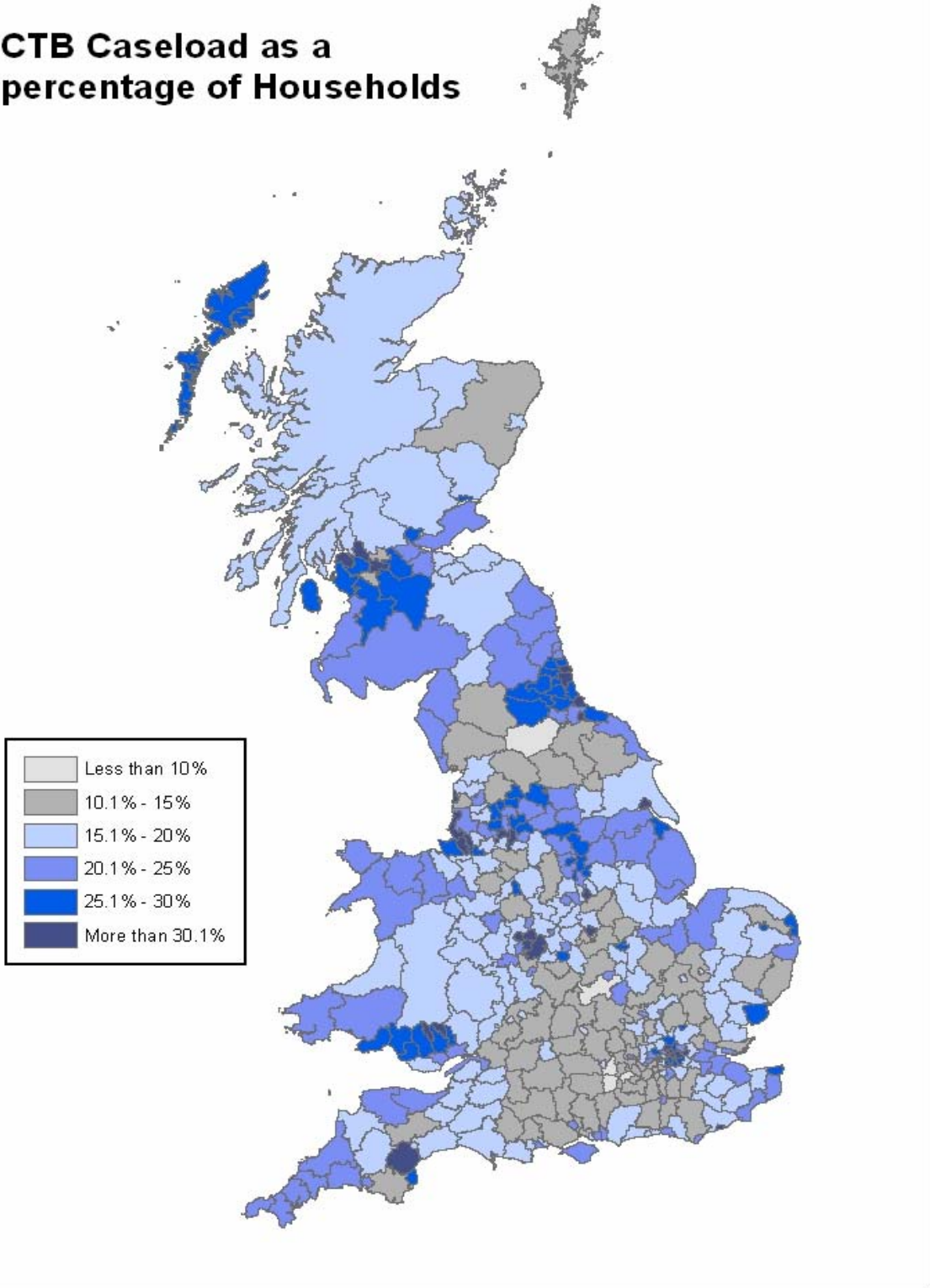
Chart 2



HB Caseload as a percentage of Households



CTB Caseload as a percentage of Households





NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Data Source

The historical National Statistics Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit data series, which is available to August 2007, are based on clerical returns made by individual local authorities of the aggregate number of people claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit at a specific point in time. From February 2007 there has been a gradual transition to improve the data collection method and move from clerical data to a monthly electronic scan of claimant level data direct from local authority computer systems. This data source (the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)) has been designed to provide sufficient information for all current and future statistical purposes and is now the single source of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit data. This is the first set of statistics that the Department will publish from SHBE.

2. Caseload Definition and Methodology

The definition of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit caseload is:

Snapshot figure using count date of 2nd Thursday in the month
Live in payment cases
Individual claimants

A detailed paper describing the definition and methodology accompanies the statistics.

3. Passported Benefit

Many Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit recipients are also in receipt of another income-related benefit - Income Support, Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit), Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-based), Employment Support Allowance (Income-based). The breakdowns provided are as recorded within the Local Authorities Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit administration systems.

4. Substituting missing Data

Five Local Authorities have not submitted SHBE data during the period that we have analysed. The data published therefore relates to August 2007, the latest data available. In addition, a small number of Local Authorities did not return data for all of the months analysed. In these cases data was substituted from the nearest available month for that particular Local Authority and recorded in the publication. By adopting this method to deal with missing data, monthly national caseload figures will include estimated figures. It is assumed that a particular Local Authority's caseload will not fluctuate greatly from month to month, and therefore using substituted data for a relatively small number of Local Authorities, will have a minimal impact on the total caseload figure.

6. Flows on and off Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Also available are Experimental figures on flows on and off Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. A paper detailing the limitations of the data are explained in information that accompanies them.