

Department for Work and Pensions

Information Directorate

Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit Caseload Statistics

Definition and Methodology

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BACKGROUND

HB / CTB Caseload were previously compiled from clerical return form 121:

Link to [Stats 121 guidance](#).

These were **aggregate** data from each LA detailing the number of people claiming HB / CTB, with various breakdowns of this caseload also included.

For the 121 returns a set 'count date' was used, which was the 2nd Thursday in the month. LAs were asked to return their form no later than four weeks after this count date. The caseloads for 121 forms were claims in payment.

SHBE data consists of returns of **individual** records level data from LAs. The returns are monthly from LAs and there are two type of records contained in the extract which might feed into caseload statistics.

'D' records are 'live' cases on a specified count date – this count date being different for different LAs and spread over the course of a month.

'C' records are 'closed' cases since the previous extract date.

The attached details 2010 count and extraction dates for each LA:

Link to [2010 extraction dates](#).

CASELOAD DEFINITION

The definition of HB / CTB caseload is:

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

Snapshot and count date

A snapshot measure of caseload on a particular day is consistent with the definition of caseload for DWP benefit statistics and having this snapshot on the same day also means that statistics across LAs are comparable in this respect. A count date of 2nd Thursday in the month is consistent with the previous definition used for HB / CTB Caseload National Statistics (and is the count date used for Claimant Count Statistics).

Live in payment cases

A definition of status of claim is live in payment (award amount for HB \geq 50p and CTB $>$ 0p).

This is consistent with previous definition used for HB and CTB caseload statistics.

Individuals

Consistent with the definition used in other benefit statistics, the caseload statistics are a measure of individuals claiming, rather than all claims. So, for example, if an individual has two separate HB claims at the same point in time, they will be recorded in the statistics as one individual claiming HB.

It is estimated that less than 0.2 per cent of people claiming HB / CTB have more than one claim.

METHODOLOGY

'D' and 'C' records

The broad methodology is to use 'D' records (live claims) and 'C' records (closed claims between extracts) to base caseload statistics on.

The count date for caseload statistics will be the 2nd Thursday in the month. The nature of SHBE data collection means that for some local authorities their 'D' records in a particular extract will relate to a date before the 2nd Thursday and for others it will relate to a date after the 2nd Thursday. To allow complete coverage of the count date across all LAs, a minimum of two (months) SHBE extract records need to be used – for example, for complete coverage of a count date of 14th May 2009, both the May09 and June09 SHBE extracts should be used.

Using 'C' records will identify short term claims that were live on the count date but not on the extraction date either side of this date. 'C' Records will also be used to check that 'D' records had not in fact finished before the count date.

RETROSPECTION

This is the time period allowed for additional / updated information to be incorporated into the data.

Using two months SHBE extracts allows a maximum of two month for additional / updated information to be incorporated (this is line with time allowed for previous clerical 121 forms to be returned). This allows HB / CTB caseload statistics to be published approximately 3 months after the reference date (i.e. caseload statistics for May released in August).

Using three months SHBE extracts allows a maximum of three months for additional / updated information to be incorporated. This allows HB / CTB caseload statistics to be published approximately four months after the reference date (i.e. caseload statistics for April released in August).

Analysis using these two methods suggests that numbers on caseload would be approximately 1 per cent higher at National level by allowing an extra month's retrospection; although for some individual LAs this difference is greater. It is likely, however, that at least part of his difference is due to some LAs submitting two or more month's worth of data in one SHBE data submission during the period of building up SHBE returns.

It is practice that if data would be revised by no more than 1 per cent, then the benefits of releasing statistics earlier outweigh the extra accuracy of the figures.

Therefore two months SHBE extracts will be used to produce HB / CTB caseload statistics.

PROCESSING

Please see flow diagram showing the processing using a count date of 12 February 2009 as an example.

Link to [Derivation Method flow diagram](#).

The key points are:

- We can only use records with non missing NINO and claim start date (missing values are filtered out at the beginning)
- Processing takes account of the fact that some LAs return data before the count date and so we need to be sure the claim is live on the count date.
- Use data on closed claims to include short term claims which were live on the count date.
- When de-duping cases (to get one record per individual) take D records in preference to C records and take D records closest to count date.

This processing is used to obtain the overall 'frozen' caseload dataset for a particular month. It is this 'frozen' dataset that is used to produce monthly National Statistic¹ caseload statistics. Further detail is described in Annex A and includes derivation rules used to obtain breakdowns such as entitlement amount, tenancy type, etc.

The SAS code used for this stage of the processing is available on request.

¹ National Statistics are prepared in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information can be found at:- <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk>

Annex A

CASELOAD DERIVATIONS

MONTHLY CASELOAD FIGURES

This section sets out how Information Directorate will derive monthly caseload figures using 2 months SHBE data².

The definition of HB / CTB caseload is:

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

The broad methodology is to use 'D' records (live claims) and 'C' records (closed claims between extracts) to base caseload statistics on.

Derivation used to identify monthly caseload figures (further detail can be found at Derivation Method.xls contained in this document):

Step 1

Select D and C records only

Field 1 = D or C

Count cases with:

a value in Field 4 (NINO) and {in Field 41 (HB start date) or Field 201 (CTB start date)}

Note if Field 41 (HB Start date) and/or Field 201 (CTB start date) is missing and Field 1 = D then count cases with a value in Field 220 (CDHBMAD) or Field 229 (CDCTMADE)³

(Use claim start and end dates (Fields 41, 201, 202, and 203) and file extraction date to retain cases 'live' on relevant 'count' date)

² The count date for caseload statistics will be the 2nd Thursday in the month. The nature of SHBE data collection means that for some local authorities their 'D' records in a particular extract will relate to a date before the 2nd Thursday and for others it will relate to a date after the 2nd Thursday. To allow complete coverage of the count date across all LAs, a minimum of two (months) SHBE extract records need to be used – for example, for complete coverage of a count date of 14th May 2009, both the May09 and June09 SHBE extracts should be used.

³ An improvement in methodology was introduced for the November 2009 publication following the identification of an inconsistency in the use of Field 41 and Field 201 for 25 local authorities.

Step 2

Retain Live in payment cases only (award amount for HB \geq 50p and CTB $>$ 0p) and remove Second Adult Rebate cases from the CTB caseload.

Exclude cases where:

Field 43 (HB amount) $<$ 50p ('HB' D records (Fields 1 and 41))

Field 44 (CTB amount) $<$ 1p and Field 60 (LCSAR) =1 ('CTB' D records (Fields 1 and 201))

Step 3

Only retain one record per individual (separately for HB and CTB) using NINO (Field 4) claim start date (Field 41 and Field 201) and record type (Field 1) as identifier.

D record will be retained in preference of C records and we will take D records closest to count date.

Note: If SHBE data is missing or incomplete for individual LAs for a particular month then an earlier or later months data is substituted.

POPULATION SPLITS

It is standard practice to split the overall caseload into different groups; depending on the nature of the claim, or the characteristics of the client group. The population splits are detailed below;

Passported Status

Many HB/CTB recipients are also in receipt of another income-related benefit. On SHBE the single field PASSPORTIND (Field 12) is used to distinguish between all of these types of claimants.

Passported

Count cases where:

Field 12 (PASSPORTIND) = 1, 2, 3 or 5

Income Support: Field 12 = 1

Pension Credit: Field 12 = 2

JSA: Field 12 = 3

ESA: Field 12 = 5

Non-passported (Standard Claims)

Count cases where:

Field 12 = 4

Under 65 / 65 and over

Under 65

If the claimant (if single) or the elder of the claimant or partner (if claiming as a couple) is under 65 then they are classed in this group.

Count cases where:

Coupleage < 65

(age = count date – Field 8 (CDDOB)
(pcage = count date – Field 178 (PDDOB))
(coupleage =max(age, pcage))

65 and over

If the claimant (if single) or the elder of the claimant or partner (if claiming as a couple) is 65 or over then they are classed in this group.

Count cases where:

Coupleage >= 65

(age = count date – Field 8 (CDDOB)
(pcage = count date – Field 178 (PDDOB))
(coupleage =max(age, pcage))

Tenancy Type (Rent Rebate/Rent Allowance)

The tenancy type of the claim is another key split that is used in analysis. The SHBE contains a single field (Field 9) to distinguish between the main tenancy types. Annex B details a change in methodology for Field 9 (CCTEN) for Local Authorities affected by Northgate Release 6.0.

Social Rented Sector

Count cases where:

Field 9 = 1, 4 or 8

LA Tenants (Rent Rebate)

Count cases where:

Field 9 = 1 or 8

Registered Social Landlord Tenant

Count cases where:

Field 9 = 4

Private Rented Sector

Count cases where:

Field 9 = 2, 3, 6 or 9

Private Regulated Tenants: Field 9 =2

Private Deregulated Tenants: Field 9 = 3 or 9

Local Housing Allowance Tenants: Field 9 =3 or 9 and (Field 62 = 1 or Field 41 > 6Apr2008)

Family Type

The family type breakdown uses information on partners and child dependants to split the caseload into 4 groups:

Single no child dependants

Count cases where no information on partner and

Field 13 (DNNUMDEPS) = 0

Single with child dependant(s)

Count cases where no information on partner and

Field 13 (DNNUMDEPS) > 0

Couple, no child dependant(s)

Count cases where

[Field 126 (PCNINO) is populated or Field 123 (PCPTNRFG) > 0] and Field 125(PDEND) < count date

And

Field 13 (DNNUMDEPS) = 0

Couple with child dependant(s).

Field 126 (PCNINO) is populated or Field 123 (PCPTNRFG) > 0 and Field 125(PDEND) < count date

And

Field 13 (DNNUMDEPS) > 0.

Annex B: Change in methodology for CCTEN for LAs affected by Northgate Release 6.0.

For the period June to August, released on 11th November 2009, a fix has been applied to the derivation of caseload to correct Tenure Type (Field 9 – CCTEN) for LAs affected by Northgate Release 6.0.

Description of solution

Following Release 6.0 investigation of Tenure Type showed a large number of CCTEN=5 for Northgate LAs from July 09. This is not observed in historical data.

Where the CCTEN value is equal to 5 we have back-matched the record to pick up the Tenancy Type from the previous months frozen dataset. Our assumption is that changes other than 5 are valid changes.

Our existing methodology back matches records where the CCTEN variable is missing to the previous frozen dataset. Therefore to alleviate the problem the derivation SAS code sets all Northgate records with a CCTEN value of 5 equal to missing and therefore forces them through the back matching process.

This solution will only work for existing cases; **any new claims will remain as missing.**

Result: CCTEN will be picked up from the historical frozen dataset which were created using data unaffected by Release 6.