

Appendix A

The Survey

Methodology

At Wave 9 of the Local Authority (LA) Omnibus Survey respondents were given a choice of completing the questionnaire on the telephone, as a self-completion questionnaire on paper or as a self-completion questionnaire on the Internet. This mixed mode approach achieved a relatively good response rate of 71 per cent and therefore, has been used from Wave 9 onwards. The response rate achieved at Wave 18 was 60 per cent (see below for more detail).

Sample

Using the updated Contacts database from Wave 17, the LA manager with responsibility for the most areas (out of Rent Rebate, Rent Allowance, Council Tax Benefit (CTB), Overpayment Recovery and Benefit Fraud) was identified. This manager then became our contact for Wave 18 and was sent a letter on Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) headed paper which set out the aims of the survey, explained the nature of the input required and advised the recipient that they had a choice of how to complete the questionnaire. The letter was signed by a DWP signatory and included contact names at both GfK NOP and DWP for queries, or if the respondent wanted to opt out of the survey.

The advance letter included details of each methodology – web-based questionnaire, paper questionnaire and telephone interview. Each respondent was assigned a user ID/password, which had to be entered at the start of the survey. This enabled GfK NOP to keep track of interviews and ensure no one completed a survey more than once. Including an ID also allowed respondents to stop and restart an interview at any point and meant that different managers could easily access and complete the sections relevant to them.

Respondents were also sent a copy of the questionnaire so that they could prepare their answers in advance, or if they chose to, use it to fill-in their answers and return it to GfK NOP in the reply-paid envelope provided. It emphasised that, if necessary, they should consult other managers and staff for their input into the questionnaire. Telephone interviewers were instructed to check that the respondent had completed the questionnaire sent in advance and that it was readily available for reference during the interview.

Questionnaire design

Both Department officials and LA managers were consulted about the content of the questionnaire in order to gain as much useful information as possible from the research.

The first stage of questionnaire development involved a meeting between GfK NOP and relevant officials within the Department to discuss current issues and policy initiatives and establish the question areas that they would like to be included in the questionnaire.

Once the questionnaire had been through several drafts, eight LA managers were contacted in order to ask them about their understanding and comprehension of the questions. We discussed the questionnaire face-to-face with three LA managers and on the telephone with a further five. These discussions also gave managers an opportunity to raise any issues that were particularly important and relevant to them at the time. They were structured around the draft questionnaire but the structure of the session was kept fluid enough to allow managers to raise new issues and enlarge on existing subjects as they wished.

The comments of these managers were reviewed with the relevant officials at DWP and the questionnaire was amended to take on board their views. The questionnaire was then piloted to test the wording and coverage of the draft document as well as the length of the questionnaire (24-28 November 2008). The questionnaire was tested on a total of 20 LA managers on the telephone, using a paper version of the questionnaire.

As for the main stage of fieldwork, each pilot respondent was sent an advance letter and questionnaire. The GfK NOP executive team and a representative from DWP briefed a small team of interviewers. The briefing covered the purpose of the survey and explanations of any particular questionnaire points, as well as allowing time for practice on the questionnaire by means of dummy interviewing. A debrief was held at the end of the pilot interviewing which involved interviewers talking through their experiences in carrying out the pilot work and highlighting any areas of confusion or ambiguity they had observed.

Fieldwork

The same team of interviewers that worked on the pilot were briefed on the telephone for the main stage of the Survey. Interviewers were also issued with full interviewer instructions, which included all survey materials including a hard copy of the questionnaire and the advance letter.

As in previous waves of the Survey, interviewers' first task was to telephone LAs and check how they planned to complete the questionnaire. Respondents choosing to undertake the survey on the telephone were then either interviewed or an appointment for another more convenient time was set-up. Those selecting to complete the questionnaire on paper or on the web were asked to complete it as soon as possible before 27 February 2009. Interviewers were then instructed to 'telephone chase' those respondents who did not return their completed questionnaire within the following ten days or so and ask them to complete it as soon as possible. This process continued throughout fieldwork. A reminder email was also sent to all non-respondents after four weeks of fieldwork.

Given the fact that this was a census of all LAs and that Housing Benefit (HB) managers are difficult to get hold of due to workload and turnover of staff, interviewers were not given a maximum number of call backs. Instead, in order to maximise the response rate across the country as a whole, they were asked to adopt a flexible approach in terms of call-backs and to liaise closely with head office throughout the fieldwork period.

Our specialist Web department within GfK NOP developed the web-based questionnaire. It was written in mrlInterview, software supplied by SPSS and hosted on the GfK NOP facility. Every attempt has been made to make sure that the web questionnaire is as user-friendly and straightforward as possible, in order to encourage as many authorities as possible to use it. With this in mind, the following changes were made at Wave 14:

- Respondents no longer had to input their own and their colleagues' contact details. They now appear on the screen for them to check and amend.
- It is now possible for more than one person to be in the questionnaire at a time.
- Respondents can now fill in a section at a time, in any order.

Interviewers were required to provide weekly progress figures that were used to identify response difficulties during fieldwork. Unobtainable numbers, no answers, wrong numbers etc were all investigated immediately.

Fieldwork started on 14 January 2009 and was supposed to finish on 27 February 2009, although it was held open for two weeks longer due to the poor response rate. By the end of fieldwork we had achieved interviews with a total of just 246 local authority managers, representing a response rate of 60 per cent. Within this achieved sample of 246 there were 12 LAs that did not complete

every section of the questionnaire. This 246 LAs breaks down as 173 web-based questionnaires, 49 paper questionnaires and 24 telephone interviews (including the pilot telephone interviews). Comparing this with Wave 17, the proportion of authorities completing the questionnaire has gone up from 55 per cent at Wave 17 to 60 per cent at Wave 18.

Interpretation of the data

Data used for the analysis is derived from three sources: the Contacts Database, DWP and the interview itself. The data was analysed by a number of different variables as shown below:

Table A.1 Data analysis variables

LA type	Welsh, Scottish, English unitary, English metropolitan, English district, London borough
LAs changing to unitary authorities	
Contracting-out status	Contracted out, Not contracted out
HB/CTB caseload	Low (up to 10,000 cases), Medium (10,001-20,000 cases), High (20,001+ cases)
Region	Scotland, North East, Yorkshire and Humberside, North West, East Midlands, West Midlands, East, South East, South West, London, Wales

Information on LA type, LAs changing to unitary authorities, HB/CTB caseload and region was provided as part of the contacts database, while contracting-out status was asked as part of the interview.

The following points should be noted when using this report:

- a sample, not the entire 'population', of LA HB managers has been interviewed. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. Where bases are low, care should be taken when interpreting the data;
- where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' or 'other' categories, or multiple answers;
- throughout the report, an asterisk indicates a value of less than 0.5 per cent but not zero, and '0' denotes no observation in that cell;
- this wave of the Survey included several questions where LAs were asked to provide percentages, for example, the percentage of working age customers that have applied for a backdated payment since October. In order to describe the data from these questions, we have used indicative average percentages. This is not a weighted average percentage and therefore, does not take into account the fact that different LAs have different caseloads. The indicative average percentage is regarded as adequate for the purpose of this report and will provide a mean that is close to a weighted average.

Statistical reliability

It should be remembered that a sample, not the entire population, of HB managers was interviewed. We cannot, therefore, be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the 'true' values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95 per cent – that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the true value will fall within a specified range.

However, given that this sample comprises 60 per cent of the total population, the level of statistical reliability is slightly higher than if the sample had come from a larger population. On this basis, responses to the questionnaire provide data with a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points at the 95 per cent level. In practice this means that where 50 per cent give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall between 46.1 per cent and 53.9 per cent. Table A.2 shows the sampling error for the whole sample and key sub-groups across a range of parameters. Note that the closer a finding is to 50 per cent the greater the variability of responses within the sample.

Table A.2 Wave 17 sampling error

	Sample size	Universe	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
All LAs	246	408	2.4	3.6	3.9
LA type					
Welsh	11	22	12.5	19.1	20.9
Scottish	22	32	7	10.7	11.7
English unitary	30	48	6.6	10	11
English metropolitan	27	36	5.7	8.6	9.4
English district	139	237	3.2	4.9	5.3
London borough	17	33	9.9	15.2	16.6

Response rates

As mentioned earlier a total of 246 LAs participated in Wave 18 of the Survey, which represents a response rate of 60 per cent. As Table A.3 shows, response rate varies by LA type, from a high of 75 per cent of English metropolitan districts to just 50 per cent of Welsh authorities.

Table A.3 Response rates by LA type

	Total N	London N	Scotland N	Wales N	English districts N	Unitary N	Metropolitan N
Telephone: Mainstage completes	4	–	–	–	3	1	–
Telephone: Pilot completes	20	–	3	1	14	2	–
Web: completes	173	13	17	7	91	22	23
Paper: completes	49	4	2	3	31	5	4
Completes – total	246	17	22	11	139	30	27
Soft call backs	7	–	–	1	4	2	–
Will complete paper questionnaire	18	4	2	1	10		1
Will complete on web	57	5	3	3	30	11	5
Refusal – insufficient time/resources	38	3	2	4	25	2	2
Refusals – insufficient time in run up to becoming unitary	11	-	-	-	11	-	-
Refusal – other reason	19	2	1	2	12	1	1
No answer/ engaged	12	2	2	–	6	2	–
Total sample	408	33	32	22	237	48	36
Response rate	60%	52%	69%	50%	59%	63%	75%

Sample profile

Table A.4 Sample profile

	Number	%
Total	246	100
LA type		
Welsh	11	4
Scottish	22	9
English unitary	30	12
English metropolitan	27	11
English district	139	57
London borough	17	7
Contracting-out status (based on 240 only as six LAs did not answer this section)		
Contracted-out	17	7
Not contracted-out	223	93
HB/CTB caseload		
Low	65	26
Medium	92	37
High	89	36
Decentralisation status (based on 237 only as nine LAs did not answer this section)		
Centralised	224	95
Decentralised	13	5
Region		
Scotland	22	9
North East	10	4
Yorkshire and Humberside	15	6
North West	26	11
East Midlands	26	11
West Midlands	23	9
East	28	11
South East	40	16
South West	28	11
London	17	7
Wales	11	4

Appendix B

Wave 18 advance letter

Housing and Fraud Research
Housing Research & Analysis
Division

USER ID: «Id»

1st Floor, Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA

Tel: 020 7449 5356

«REName»
«REJob»
«LA_Name2»
«REAdd1»
«REAdd2»
«REAdd3»
«REAdd4»
«REAdd5»
«REPCD»

5 January 2009

Dear «REName»,

Local Authority Omnibus Survey – Wave 18

I am writing to ask for your help with Wave 18 of the LA Omnibus Survey which covers the following areas:

Information, Efficiency work programme, Corporate Contact Centres, Local Housing Allowance, National Indicators, Right Benefit Toolkit, Voice Risk Analysis and Working Age Customers. You should find that you can complete most of the questionnaire yourself, with some involvement from colleagues and contractors.

As you probably know, the Survey is undertaken every six months and covers issues relating to Housing and Council Tax Benefit administration and fraud and policy that are current at the time. You can complete the questionnaire on the web, on the enclosed paper version or on the telephone with an interviewer.

In recent Waves we have introduced a number of improvements to the way the internet version of the questionnaire is administered, which we hope make it easier and quicker for you to complete:

- You no longer have to input your own, and your colleagues, contact details. Now they appear on the screen for you to check and amend
- It is now possible for more than one person to be in the questionnaire at a time
- You can now fill in a section at a time, in any order.

If you choose to fill-in the *internet version of the questionnaire*, you may access it anytime from 14 January 2008. You will find the questionnaire at the following URL: <http://www.surveys.com/lao18>

For each section you will be asked for your User ID. Please copy this carefully from the top of this letter or the enclosed questionnaire. You, or your colleagues, can access the questionnaire more than once using this User ID until you have completed it. Please complete it by 27 February 2009.

Alternatively, you may choose to complete the survey in one of the following ways:

Telephone Interview: If you choose to conduct a telephone interview, then it would be very useful if you could prepare your answers in advance of the interview (on the enclosed questionnaire), in particular for those questions which involve you giving us numerical answers. There are also some sections of the questionnaire that may benefit from prior consideration with other colleagues or contractors. You will receive a call from a GfK NOP interviewer some time between 14 January and 27 February 2009 or please contact Darren Yaxley (see details below) if you would prefer to make an appointment.

Self-Completion Questionnaire on Paper: If you choose to fill-in the questionnaire on paper, please use the enclosed questionnaire and follow the instructions on the front page. Please return it as soon as possible – by 27 February 2009 at the latest – in the pre-paid envelope provided.

The information provided in the survey is completely confidential and will be used only for research purposes by GfK NOP Research and analysts within the Department (part of IAD – who may look at the data in conjunction with other management information collected by the Department). Neither you nor your authority will be identified in any report.

If you are interested in looking at the findings for Wave 17 of the LA Omnibus Survey you can access the summary through the DWP website **from the middle**

of January 2009 at:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/summ2007-2008/556summ.pdf>

We hope you find the summary report interesting and informative.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation. If you have any queries about the survey please contact Figen Deviren at the DWP on 020 7449 5356 or Darren Yaxley at GFK NOP on 020 7890 9759.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Figen Deviren', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Figen Deviren
Senior Research Officer
Housing and Fraud Research

Appendix C

Wave 18 questionnaire



USER ID: label

JN 451875

Local Authority Omnibus Wave 18

Thank you for taking part in Wave 18 of the Survey. As mentioned in the enclosed letter, you have the choice of completing the Survey on the Internet, the telephone or on paper. Please read the instructions below before you start:

If you feel that all, or part, of this questionnaire would be better completed by someone else, either in your authority or a contractor, please pass the relevant sections on to them as soon as possible. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MAY NEED TO ASK SOMEONE ELSE TO FILL IN D14

Self-completion questionnaire on the Internet: If you choose to fill-in the questionnaire on the internet, you may access it anytime from 14 January to 27 February 2009. You will find the questionnaire at the following URL: <http://www.surveys.com/lao18>

This method is quite simple and you will be automatically routed through the questionnaire as you answer each question. It allows you to enter your site any number of times, saving your details whenever you exit, allowing you to complete the questionnaire at your own pace and convenience. However, please note that once you have input answers into the final section of the questionnaire, you will be unable to re-start again and your responses will be sent directly to GfK NOP Research.

For each section you will be asked for your User ID. Please copy this carefully from the top of the letter or this questionnaire. You, or your colleagues, can access the questionnaire more than once using this User ID until you have completed it. It is possible for more than one person to be in the questionnaire at a time and the questionnaire is set up so that if you need a colleague to complete a section you can send them the link for it in an email. All information is password protected and no one other than the GfK NOP team will be able to access your site or see your personal entries.

Telephone Interview: If you choose to conduct a telephone interview, then please use this questionnaire to prepare your answers in advance of the interview. By doing this, you should find that the interview itself will take no longer than 10/15 minutes. You will receive a call from a GfK NOP interviewer some time between 14 January and 27 February 2009.

Self-completion questionnaire on paper: If you choose to fill-in the questionnaire on paper and post it back in the pre-paid envelope enclosed, please follow the instructions below and return it as soon as possible – by 27 February 2009 at the latest.

- Most questions can be answered simply by putting one (or more) tick(s) in the box(es) next to the answer(s) that applies to your local authority
- Sometimes you are invited to write in your answer in your own words
- If you are unable to answer a particular question, please tick the "don't know" box
- Sometimes you are asked to write in a number. Please use leading zeros where necessary
- Normally, after answering each question, you go on to the next one, UNLESS a box you have ticked has an instruction to GO TO another question
- Please ensure that you check and amend the contact information at the back of the questionnaire (Section G)
- When you have finished, please POST THE QUESTIONNAIRE to us as soon as possible in the PRE-PAID ENVELOPE provided.

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The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. You or your authority will not be identified in any report. A summary of the results will be sent to you in due course.

Section A: Information

This section asks about how long it takes your authority to run the Single Housing Benefit (HB) Extract (formerly known as the HBSD-IAD scan), which DWP asks local authorities to run every month.

This data scan now provides the Department with the majority of data used for policy evaluation, forecasting, performance monitoring and data matching, replacing the need for local authorities to return statistical data clerically each quarter.

Over the last few years the Department has transformed the way it collects data on Housing and Council Tax Benefit from Local Authorities, with the changes making data collection more efficient for all parties. We are aware that at the start of all these changes it was more difficult for local authorities to see the immediate benefits for them of the move away from clerical returns to the Single HB Extract and several concerns were highlighted. However, despite this, local authorities have shown real commitment to playing their part in the transformation and modernisation programme and the Department appreciates the significant part they have played in making it a success.

The Department remains committed to ensuring that the burdens of HB/CTB data collection on local authorities are minimised going forward. As a result, we are keen to understand how long it takes to run the Single HB Extract each month, particularly since this is larger than any of the predecessor data scans (e.g. Housing Benefit Matching Service scan, HBSD-IAD scan).

The following question should be answered with regard to the most recent Single HB Extract that has been delivered to DWP by your Local Authority.

ALL ANSWER

A1 **On average, how many hours and minutes per month would you say it usually takes to extract the Single Housing Benefit Extract data scan from your system? This time should include any time taken to deal with issues and queries related to extracting the Single Housing Benefit Extract from your system. PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW. IF THE TIMES ARE NOT KNOWN THEN PLEASE TICK 'DON'T KNOW'.**

hours and minutes per month

Don't know

Section B: Efficiency Work Programme

This section repeats questions asked previously about changes you may have carried out from April 2008 or plans you have in the future for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of HB/CTB services, in order to improve the overall value for money of the service. It also asks about your awareness of the DWP resources available to support you in this. We are repeating these questions so that your responses can help DWP monitor and improve its support programme for Local Authorities in achieving their own efficiencies over the spending review period 2008-2011 and beyond.

ALL ANSWER

B1a Which of the following initiatives are included in any of your LA's overall plans to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your HB/CTB services? TICK ALL THAT APPLY IN THE FIRST COLUMN BELOW AND WRITE IN ANY OTHER PLANNED INITIATIVES

B1b For which of the initiatives included in your LA's plans do you expect planned net savings to be achieved? TICK ALL THAT APPLY IN SECOND COLUMN BELOW

B1c ANSWER FOR EACH INITIATIVE FOR WHICH NET SAVINGS ARE EXPECTED AT B1b
Do you expect this net saving to be high, medium or low? TICK AS APPROPRIATE IN THIRD COLUMN BELOW

	<i>B1a</i>	<i>B1b</i>	<i>B1c</i>			
	Included in plans	Net savings expected	High	Level of savings Medium	Low	DK
Home working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On line claim forms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint working/shared services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accommodation changes (ie. cheaper or moving staff in order to relinquish estates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benchmarking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisational restructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving IT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved performance management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outsourcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone claims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

ALL ANSWER

B2 Which, if any, of the following barriers do you feel your LA will need to overcome in trying to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your service? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- HB/CTB seen as lower priority service
 - Budgetary control
 - Internal Management/ Staff resistance to change
 - Administration e.g. Senior management agreement
 - Staffing/resource constraints
 - External pressures (e.g. local political)
 - IT issues
 - Current financial situation
 - Other (please specify)
-
- None of these
 - Don't know

B3 Which, if any, of the following resources that can support your LA's plans to deliver your HB/CTB service more efficiently and effectively have you used in the last year? TICK ALL THAT APPLY IN FIRST COLUMN BELOW AND WRITE IN ANY OTHER RESOURCES USED

ANSWER B4 FOR EACH RESOURCE USED AT B3

B4 How useful have you found this/these resource/s to date? TICK ONE ONLY FOR EACH RESOURCE USED

	B3		B4			
	Resources used	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Don't know
<i>DWP resources:</i>						
LA Efficiency section of the DWP resource website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revised Performance & Good Practice guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance Development Team consultancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Non-DWP resources:</i>						
IDeA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvement Network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CIPFA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IRRV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>					

ALL ANSWER

B5 Which, if any, of these resources, does your LA plan to use as part of your plans to deliver your HB/CTB service more efficiently and effectively in the future? **TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

DWP resources:

- LA Efficiency section of the DWP resource website
- Revised Performance & Good Practice guide
- Performance Development Team consultancy

Non-DWP resources:

- IDEA
- Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnerships
- Improvement Network
- CIPFA
- IRRV
- Other (please specify)

.....

- None of these
- Don't know

Section C: Corporate Contact Centres

Many local authorities are introducing Corporate Contact Centres to deal with council wide face-to-face and telephone enquiries, including Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) enquiries. We would like to establish how this is working in practice for Benefit Services.

A Corporate Contact Centre for the purpose of these questions means that either phone enquiries or face-to-face enquiries are dealt with corporately, usually funded and staffed separately from the Benefits Service.

ALL ANSWER

C1 Does your LA have a Corporate Contact Centre?

- Yes Go to C5
- No Answer C2
- Don't know Answer C2

ANSWER IF 'NO' OR 'DON'T KNOW' AT C1

C2 Does your LA have any plans to introduce a Corporate Contact Centre which will deal with HB/CTB enquiries?

- Yes Answer C3
- No Go to C4
- Don't know Go to Section D

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C2

C3 When does your LA plan to do this?

- Within less than 3 months
- In 3 - 6 months
- In 7-12 months
- Longer than a year
- Don't know

NOW GO TO SECTION D

ANSWER IF 'NO' AT C2

C4 Why does your LA not plan to introduce a Corporate Contact Centre which deals with HB/CTB enquiries? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- It will be too expensive for the Benefits Service
- Benefits Service staff will still have to get involved in detailed HB/CTB enquiries from callers
- The Corporate Contact Centre staff are unlikely to be fully trained in HB/CTB work
- It will not reduce the burden on the Benefits Service
- Poor feedback from LAs which currently have a Corporate Contact Centre
- Other (please write in)
-
- Don't know

NOW GO TO SECTION D

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C1

C5 Does the Corporate Contact Centre deal with HB/CTB enquiries?

- Yes Answer C6
 No Go to Section D
 Don't know Go to Section D

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C5

C6 Does this include dealing with HB/CTB enquires from customers who contact the centre in person, by telephone or both? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Enquiries in person only Answer C7
 Telephone enquiries only Answer C8
Both telephone and in person Answer C6 and C8
 Don't know Go to C9

ANSWER IF 'ENQUIRIES IN PERSON' AT C6

C7 Approximately, what percentage of HB/CTB enquiries that are made in person at the centre are resolved by Corporate Contact Centre staff without recourse to the Benefits Service?

PLEASE WRITE IN APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE

%

Don't know

ANSWER IF 'TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES' AT C6

C8 Approximately, what percentage of HB/CTB enquiries that are made by telephone to the centre are resolved by Corporate Contact Centre staff without recourse to the Benefits Service?

PLEASE WRITE IN APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE

%

Don't know

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C1

C9 Did the Benefits Service take a reduction in its budget to pay for the Corporate Contact Centre?

- Yes Answer C10
 No Go to C11
 Don't know Go to C11

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C9

C10 How many FTE posts did this reduction amount to? PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER BELOW (ROUND UP TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER)

FTE posts

Don't know

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C1

C11 Do you know how much the Benefits Service is charged for the Corporate Contact Centre service?

- Yes Answer C12
- No Go to C13
- Don't know Go to C13

ANSWER IF YES AT C11

C12 Do you think the amount charged for the Corporate Contact Centre represents value for money for the Benefits Service?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C1

C13 Have any experienced HB/CTB staff transferred to the Corporate Contact Centre?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

C14 Do you regard having a Corporate Contact Centre as a successful way to deal with HB/CTB enquiries?

- Yes Answer C15
- No Answer C16
- Don't know Go to Section D

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT C14

C15 Why do you regard having a Corporate Contact Centre as a successful way to deal with HB/CTB enquiries? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Takes the burden off Benefits Service staff
- Staff in the Corporate Contact Centre are well trained
- HB/CTB staff transferred to the Corporate Contact Centre providing expertise
- The Corporate Contact Centre deals with all aspects of HB/CTB enquiries
- Very few enquiries are forwarded to the Benefits Service to deal with
- Good communication between the Benefits Service and the Corporate Contact Centre
- Other (please write in)
-
- Don't know

ANSWER IF 'NO' AT C14**C16 Why do you NOT regard having a Corporate Contact Centre as a successful way to deal with HB/CTB enquiries? TICK ALL THAT APPLY**It is too expensive for the Benefits Service Benefits Service staff still have to get involved in detailed HB/CTB enquiries from callers The Corporate Contact Centre staff are not fully trained in HB/CTB work The turnover for Corporate Contact Centre staff makes it difficult to provide training/expertise in HB/CTB It has not reduced the burden on the Benefits Service Poor communication between the Benefits Service and the Corporate Contact Centre

Other (please write in)

..... Don't know

Section D: Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The following questions are focussed on the private rented sector (PRS) and the roll-out of Local Housing Allowance. We appreciate that you were asked some questions about your preparedness for the LHA in Wave 16 of the LA Omnibus Survey. The questions we are asking in this wave of the Survey aim to follow up on your experience in administering the Local Housing Allowance nearly one year after national roll-out commenced.

Clients with difficulty managing financial affairs

Although the default position for the LHA is that clients receive their benefit directly, safeguards are in place for customers for whom this may not be a suitable payment method. This section will ask you some questions about how this policy is operating in your local authority.

D1 Local Housing Allowance payments are made direct to tenants but under certain circumstances can be made to landlords instead. What checks does your LA have in place when considering making payments directly to the claimant? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Claimant has a bank account or can open one
- Claimant does not have debt problems or recent CCJs
- Claimant's record of rent payment is satisfactory
- Claimant does not have learning disabilities that may impact rent payments
- Claimant does not have mental health concerns that may impact rent payments
- Claimant does not have an addiction or similar dependency that may impact rent payments
- Other (please specify)
-
- None
- Don't know

D2 Does your LA have staff with special expertise who make determinations about whether safeguards should be applied to LHA cases or are determinations part of the standard functions of the teams processing housing benefit? TICK ONE ONLY

- Staff with specific expertise
- Part of the standard functions of processing teams
- Other (please specify)
-
- Don't know

Money Advice

As you are aware, customers receiving LHA usually have their payments made directly, but tenants claiming other types of housing benefit may also have this option. Direct payments are most likely to be made by Automated Credit Transfer (ACT) or cheque. We would now like to ask some questions about how your LA answers customer questions on how to set up a bank account or how bank accounts operate.

ALL ANSWER

D3 Where a claimant does not have a bank account or does not understand how bank accounts operate, which of the following actions does your LA take? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Offer in-house advice
- Refer customer to a third party organisation that can offer help in this area
- Refer them to a bank or building society
- Other (please specify)
-
Don't know

D4 What proportion of LHA cases do you estimate have needed money advice in your LA? TICK ONE ONLY. IF YOU TICK 'LESS THAN 10%' PLEASE ALSO WRITE IN THE ACTUAL PERCENTAGE

Less than 10% (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN ACTUAL PERCENTAGE BELOW)

-
10% - 24%
- 25% - 49%
- 50% - 74%
- 75% to 100%
- Don't know

D5 As you are aware, receiving payments means tenants must manage their own money. In cases where you currently make housing benefit payments directly to tenants, how often are payment periods made to coincide with rent charging periods? TICK ONE ONLY

- Yes, in all cases Go to D7
- Yes, in some cases Go to D7
- No Answer D6
- Don't know Go to D7

ANSWER IF 'NO' AT D5

D6 Does your authority have any plans to make changes to your payment systems so that payment periods coincide with rent charging periods?

- Yes
- Considering, but too early to say
- No
- Don't know

Impact of operating the LHA and the previous housing benefit scheme for private sector tenants

As you are aware, the LHA is only initially being applied to new claims. This means that the LHA operates alongside the previous HB schemes. In this section, we would like to ask about how your LA is finding the operation of LHA when compared with the previous HB scheme for private sector tenants.

ALL ANSWER

D7 Overall, does your LA find that it requires more, less or about the same staff time to administer LHA than the existing HB scheme for private sector tenants?

- More Answer D8
- Less Go to D9
- About the same Go to D9
- Don't know Go to D9

ANSWER IF 'MORE' AT D7

D8 In what particular areas do you think it requires more staff time to operate LHA than the existing HB scheme for PRS tenants. TICK THE TWO MOST FREQUENT CATEGORIES FROM THE LIST BELOW

- Helping tenants to open bank account
- Split payments to tenants and landlords
- Operation of safeguards policy
- Managing rent arrears
- Managing shortfalls between LHA and contractual rent
- Dealing with landlords complaints or queries
- Operating multiple sets of LHA rates due to LA lying in more than one BRMAS
- Other (please write in)
-
Don't know

ALL ANSWER

D9 Have queries from landlords increased, decreased or stayed the same with the introduction of LHA? PLEASE TICK ONE ONLY

- Increased a lot
- Increased a little
- Stayed the same
- Decreased a little
- Decreased a lot
- Don't know

**D10 What are the two areas that landlords most often query in relation to the LHA?
TICK THE TWO MOST FREQUENT CATEGORIES FROM THE LIST BELOW**

- Inconvenience of having rent paid directly to tenants
- Time to process applications and award LHA
- Low level of LHA when compared to market rents
- Rent arrears or missed payments
- Increase in cash payments from tenants
- Information about LHA rates
- Other (please write in)
-
Don't know

D11 In your opinion, since LHA, have private sector landlords been more or less willing to let property to housing benefit tenants or has there been no change?

- More willing
- Less willing
- No change
- Don't know

**D12 Is the level of queries from tenants for advice and information about LHA more or less than that for HB for the remaining PRS tenants, or is it about the same?
TICK ONE ONLY**

- A lot more
- A little more
- About the same
- A little less
- A lot less
- Don't know

D13 What are the two areas that tenants most often query in relation to the LHA? TICK THE TWO CATEGORIES WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF FRAUD AND ERROR FROM THE LIST BELOW

- Breaking their existing HB claim in order to move to LHA
- Landlords raising their rents to align with LHA rates
- Landlords charging LHA rates based on their family composition
but providing a smaller property
- Availability of property
- Shortfalls between rent and LHA
- Whether LHA can be paid direct to landlords instead of themselves
- Other (please write in)
-
Don't know

Homelessness

Please contact an appropriate member of staff in your LA and ask them to respond to Question D14 below. If your LA has its own housing stock, then the Housing Manager or Head of Housing is likely to be able to answer this question. If your stock has been transferred, then homelessness may fall to social or community services.

We are concerned about the impact of any new policies on homelessness and would like to ask you a question about whether the introduction of LHA in April 2008 has had any impact on homelessness or not.

D14 Since the roll-out of LHA do you think that homelessness has increased as a result of LHA, decreased as a result of LHA or that LHA has had no impact on homelessness? TICK ONE ONLY

- Homelessness has increased as a result of LHA
- Homelessness has decreased as a result of LHA
- LHA has had no impact on homelessness
- Don't know

Fraud and Error and the LHA

ALL ANSWER

D15 Do you think the level of fraud and error has increased, decreased or stayed the same since the introduction of the LHA scheme (compared to the HB scheme for private sector tenants)?

- Increased a lot Answer D16
- Increased a little Answer D16
- Stayed the same Go to E1
- Decreased a little Go to E1
- Decreased a lot Go to E1
- Don't know Go to E1

ANSWER IF 'INCREASED' AT D15

D16 What are the main areas in which fraud and error has increased under the LHA compared to the HB scheme for private sector tenants? TICK THE TWO MOST FREQUENT CATEGORIES FROM THE LIST BELOW

- False declaration of household composition to increase LHA rate
- Changes in circumstances not declared
- Difficulty proving residency/claimants moving out but still receiving payments
- Encourage collusion between landlords and tenants
- BACS payments makes it harder to keep track of payments
- BACS payments encourage fraud/ make fraud easier

Other (please write in)

.....

Don't know

Section E: National Indicators

There are two new national performance indicators for HB/CTB from 2008/09. They link to DWP's 3 year strategic objective to pay customers the right benefit at the right time. They replace the performance measures that applied up to 2007/08 under the HB/CTB performance standards. They form part of the suite of 198 national indicators for local government in England, and are also included in the relevant indicator sets for Scotland and Wales. Local authorities are not required to set targets against these indicators (unless they are included in a Local Area Agreement in England). DWP is interested to know the extent to which local authorities are actually setting targets against these indicators. The information provided will help DWP to forecast how far national performance on processing times and reducing fraud and error might improve in the future, and will help DWP assess progress against its own strategic objectives. The information obtained will also be valuable to LAs to help them benchmark any targets they have set for themselves against groups of similar LAs and national trends.

NATIONAL INDICATOR 180 (RIGHT BENEFIT) & SCOTLAND AND WALES EQUIVALENTS**ALL ANSWER**

E1 Has your LA set targets for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit)?

- Yes Answer E2
 No Go to E10
 Don't know Go to E10

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E1

E2 Is the target for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit) for one, two, three or more years?

- One year
 Two years
 Three or more years
 Don't know

E3 What is your LA's target per thousand caseload for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit) for 2008/09? PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOXES BELOW

Don't know

E4 Is your LA on track to achieve its 2008/9 target for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit)?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

E5 Has your LA set the target for 2009/10 for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit)?

- Yes Answer E6
 No Go to E9
 Don't know Go to E9

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E5

E6 What is the target per thousand caseload for 2009/10 for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit)? PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOXES BELOW

Don't know

E7 Has your LA set the target for 2010/11 for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit)?

Yes Answer E8
 No Go to E9
 Don't know Go to E9

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E7

E8 What is the target per thousand caseload for 2010/11 for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit)? PLEASE WRITE IN THE BOXES BELOW

Don't know

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E1

E9 Does your LA have interim (ie milestones) targets within each year for the National Indicator 180 (Right Benefit)?

Yes
 No
 Don't know

NATIONAL INDICATOR 181 (RIGHT TIME) & SCOTLAND AND WALES EQUIVALENTS**ALL ANSWER**

E10 Has your LA set targets for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time)?

Yes Answer E11
 No Go to Section F
 Don't know Go to Section F

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E10

E11 Is the target for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time) for one, two, three or more years?

One year
 Two years
 Three or more years
 Don't know

E12 What is your target in days for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time) for 2008/09? PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER OF DAYS IN BOXES BELOW

days

Don't know

E13 Is your LA on track to achieve your 2008/9 target for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time)?

Yes

No

Don't know

E14 Has your LA set the target for 2009/10 for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time)?

Yes Answer E15

No Go to E18

Don't know Go to E18

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E14

E15 What is the target in days for 2009/10 for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time)? PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER OF DAYS IN BOXES BELOW

days

Don't know

E16 Has your LA set the target for 2010/11 for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time)?

Yes Answer E17

No Go to E18

Don't know Go to E18

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E16

E17 What is the target in days for 2010/11 for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time)? PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER OF DAYS IN BOXES BELOW

days

Don't know

ANSWER IF 'YES' AT E10

E18 Does your LA have interim (ie milestones) targets within each year for the National Indicator 181 (Right Time)?

Yes

No

Don't know

Section F: Right Benefit Toolkit

In April 2008, the HB performance measures were replaced by two indicators – the Right Benefit and the Right Time indicators. The Right Benefit indicator measures the number of changes in HB entitlement in each local authority’s caseload, both increase and decreases, encouraging LAs to reduce the number of awards that are incorrect. The main cause of HB error is customers’ failure to report changes in their circumstances.

ALL ANSWER

F1 Last October, DWP launched a Right Benefit Toolkit to help LAs plan and engage in activities to reduce error in their caseloads. Is you LA aware of the Toolkit?

- Yes Answer F2
- No Go to Section G
- Don’t know Go to Section G

ANSWER IF ‘YES’ AT F1

F2 The Right Benefit Toolkit comprises a number of products which are listed in the table below. Please indicate whether you have (a) not looked at the product yet, (b) looked at the product but don’t plan to use it, (c) plan to used the product in the future or (d) have used it already. PLEASE TICK ONE OF THE FOUR BOXES (a) to (d) FOR F2 IN THE TABLE BELOW

ANSWER FOR EACH RESOURCE USED ALREADY (TICKED IN THE (d) COLUMN) AT F2. IF NONE USED GO TO F4

F3 In general have you found this/these product/s helpful or unhelpful to date? TICK ONE ONLY FOR EACH PRODUCT USED

Right Benefit Toolkit Products	F2				F3		
	(a) Not looked at yet	(b) Looked at but don’t plan to use	(c) Plan to use in the future	(d) Used already	Helpful	Not helpful	Don’t know
Engaging with Customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluating Initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tracking Template	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Best Mix of Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Example Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ANSWER IF ‘YES’ AT F1

F4 What other products would you like to see in the Right Benefit Toolkit? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Change of circumstance letter templates
- Change of circumstance poster templates
- Change of circumstance leaflet templates
- Details from LAs of initiatives that have worked for them
- Other (please specify).

-
- None of these
- Don’t know

Section G: Voice Risk Analysis

The Department is currently working with a number of local authorities to test Voice Risk Analysis (VRA) technology. VRA works by analysing tiny changes in a caller’s voice which may suggest they are misrepresenting the true details of their claim. The system doesn’t detect lies – it detects the level of abnormal stress in someone’s voice.

Results of initial trials of VRA were announced in spring 2008 and a larger second wave of trials began in the summer of 2008. In summer 2009 the Department will publish a paper outlining advice for LAs as to the advantages or otherwise of VRA and whether process can be improved to allow fast tracking of claimants judged to be of low risk.

The Department is keen to discover how local authorities’ views on the use of VRA within Housing Benefit compare with the view expressed in last year’s survey.

ALL ANSWER

G1 Is your LA currently using, or planning to use, Voice Risk Analysis (VRA)?

TICK ONE ONLY

- Currently using
- Not currently using:
 - Planning to use in future
 - Not planning to use in future
 - No plans to use at present, but interested in principle
 - Don't know

G2 How interested would your LA be in using VRA for each of the following activities (if the pilots are successful)? TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested	Don't know
New claims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other LA functions (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....					
.....					

Section H: Working age customers

Since October 2008, the rules concerning the backdating of Housing and Council Tax Benefit have been amended. People of working age can request up to 6 months backdated payment, and people who have attained the qualifying age for Pensions Credit can receive up to 3 months automatic backdating. The Government will review these arrangements at the end of 2009 and therefore needs to understand the impact of the new rules on our customers and on local authorities. This new information will build on the data you have previously provided in Wave 16 which asked a number of questions about how claims were backdated prior to the October 2008 changes.

ALL ANSWER

QUESTIONS H1-H5 ASK YOU TO PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR WORKING AGE CUSTOMERS AND PEOPLE AGED 60+ SEPARATELY. IF THIS INFORMATION IS NOT HELD SEPARATELY, THEN PLEASE GO TO QH6

H1 When working age customers apply for backdated HB/CTB payment they have to show good cause for not applying earlier. What percentage of working age customers have applied for a backdated payment since October 2008? PLEASE WRITE IN THE PERCENTAGE IN THE BOXES BELOW. IF PRECISE PERCENTAGE IS NOT KNOWN THEN PLEASE PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE.

%

None Go to H4

Don't know Go to H4

ANSWER IF AMOUNT ENTERED IN % AT H1

H2 What percentage of those working age customers that applied were (a) successfully awarded a backdated payment and what percentage were (b) unsuccessful? PLEASE WRITE IN THE PERCENTAGES IN THE BOXES BELOW. IF PRECISE PERCENTAGES ARE NOT KNOWN THEN PLEASE PROVIDE ESTIMATES. THE TOTAL FOR THE TWO PERCENTAGES SHOULD NOT EXCEED 100%.

	Percentage %
(a) Successful	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
(b) Not successful	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Don't know	<input type="text"/>

ANSWER IF PERCENTAGE ENTERED IN H2 (b) FOR THOSE NOT SUCCESSFUL. IF '000' AT H2 (b) OR DON'T KNOW GO TO H4

H3 Thinking of those working age customers who were not successful, what percentage had been refused an award because they had asked for a backdated payment to cover a period longer than the maximum limit of 6 months? PLEASE WRITE IN THE PERCENTAGE IN THE BOXES BELOW. IF PRECISE PERCENTAGE IS NOT KNOWN THEN PLEASE PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE.

%

Don't know

ALL ANSWER

H4 People aged 60 or over are entitled to automatic backdating of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit of up to 3 months. What percentage of customers aged 60 or over have been awarded a backdated payment since October 2008? PLEASE WRITE IN THE PERCENTAGE IN THE BOXES BELOW. IF PRECISE PERCENTAGE IS NOT KNOWN THEN PLEASE PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE.

	Percentage %
	□ □ □
Don't know	□

ANSWER IF PERCENTAGE ENTERED IN H4. IF YOU HAVE TICKED DON'T KNOW GO TO H6

H5 Thinking of those customers aged 60+, what percentage had asked for a backdated payment to cover a period longer than the maximum limit of 3 months? PLEASE WRITE IN THE PERCENTAGE IN THE BOXES BELOW. IF PRECISE PERCENTAGE IS NOT KNOWN THEN PLEASE PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE.

□ □ □ %

Don't know □

ALL ANSWER

H6 Now thinking about all customers, has the change to backdating rules made things better or worse for customers for each of the following? TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Much better	A little better	Neither better nor worse	A little worse	Much worse	Too early to say	Don't know
Claim processing time	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Amount of evidence customers must submit	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Level of rent or council tax arrears	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Incidence of homelessness	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Number of tribunal appeals	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Number of evictions	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Other (please specify)	□	□	□	□	□		
.....							

H7 And in your opinion has the overall effect of the rule change for backdating had a positive or negative effect on customers, or has it made no difference?

- Very positive
- Fairly positive
- Made no difference
- Fairly negative
- Very negative
- Don't know

H8 Has the change to backdating rules made things better or worse for your local authority for each of the following? TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Much better	A little better	Neither better nor worse	A little worse	Much worse	Too early to say	Don't know
Claim processing time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amount of evidence customers must submit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of rent or council tax arrears	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incidence of homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of tribunal appeals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of evictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

H9 And in your opinion has the overall effect of the rule change for backdating had a positive or negative effect on your local authority, or has it made no difference?

- Very positive
- Fairly positive
- Made no difference
- Fairly negative
- Very negative
- Don't know

ALL ANSWER**Section I: Decentralisation and Contact Information**

DWP is interested in identifying in which LAs CTB and HB administration is contracted out and or decentralised. They are also keen to keep the contact information they have for your LA updated. The information that you provide on the following questions will only be passed back to DWP Policy Group, where appropriate.

I1 Is HB and CTB administration:

- Centralised i.e. one or two offices deal with and process claims Go to I4
 Decentralised i.e. on three or more sites/offices – (by decentralised we mean that the management of the service is decentralised and not the access points for claimants) Go to I2
 Don't know Go to I4

ANSWER IF "DECENTRALISED" AT G1**I2 Are you the manager with overall responsibility for the decentralised offices?**

- Yes Go to I4
 No Go to I3
 No manager with overall responsibility Go to I4
 Don't know Go to I4

ANSWER IF "NO" AT I2**I3 Please can you provide details of the manager who has overall responsibility for the decentralised offices?**

NAME: -----

JOB TITLE: -----

ADDRESS (INCLUDE POSTCODE): -----

TELEPHONE NUMBER WITH EXTENSION: -----

FAX NO: -----

EMAIL ADDRESS: -----

ALL ANSWER

I4 Is HB and CTB administration contracted out?

- Yes, fully Go to I5
- Yes, partially Go to I5
- No Go to I7

- Don't know Go to I7

ANSWER IF "YES" AT I4

I5 When did this contract start?

Enter month and year

I6 What is the name of the contractor? (WRITE IN)

.....

ALL ANSWER

I7 Has your authority contracted out HB/CTB fraud investigations?

- Yes
- No

- Don't know

I8 Which of the following do you personally have responsibility for?

TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Rent Rebate/Rent Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit/Revenues
- Overpayment Recovery
- Benefit Fraud
- Visiting Services (Combined)
- Front Office/Call Centres
- Discretionary Housing Payments/vulnerability
- Other (please specify)
-
- None of these

PLEASE COMPLETE DETAILS FOR OVERPAYMENT RECOVERY AND BENEFIT FRAUD IF YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM YOURSELF. IF YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BOTH, PLEASE GO TO G10

I9 Please provide details of the manager with overall responsibility for each of the following...

a) Overpayment recovery:

NAME: -----

JOB TITLE: -----

ADDRESS (INCLUDE POSTCODE): -----

TELEPHONE NUMBER WITH EXTENSION: -----

FAX NO: -----

EMAIL ADDRESS: -----

b) Benefit Fraud:

NAME: -----

JOB TITLE: -----

ADDRESS (INCLUDE POSTCODE): -----

TELEPHONE NUMBER WITH EXTENSION: -----

FAX NO: -----

EMAIL ADDRESS: -----

ALL ANSWER

I10 And finally please can you check your own contact details (printed below) and tick the appropriate box below.

- All my contact details are correct
I have made some amendments
I have written in the missing contact details

FULL NAME: <<RENAME>>

JOB TITLE: <<REJOB>>

TELEPHONE NUMBER, WITH EXTENSION: <<RETEL>>

FAX NUMBER: <<REFAX>>

EMAIL ADDRESS: <<REEMAIL>>

ADDRESS (INC, POSTCODE): <<READD1>>, <READD2>>, <<READD3>>, <<READD4>>,
<<READD5>>, <<REPCD>>

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PARTICIPATE IN WAVE 18 OF THE
LOCAL AUTHORITY OMNIBUS SURVEY.**

