

<b>Circular Reference:</b>		<b>G11/2010</b>	
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>General Information</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<p><b>Contacting Child benefit Contact Centre</b> HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC) are looking to introduce a new procedure so that Local Authorities (LAs) will be able to contact the Child Benefit Office by GCSX email.</p> <p>Currently LAs request details about child benefit by fax and details of how to do this were provided in HB/CTB Bulletin G3/2009.</p> <p>Until any changes are made, HMRC would like to remind LAs that they do not need to send duplicate faxes if they have not yet received a reply to their query. HMRC receive a large number of requests and are working to reduce their backlog.</p> <p><b>Treatment of foster children in the HB assessment</b> Foster children will now be taken into account when applying the size criteria in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cases following the ruling of two decisions by the Upper Tribunal (CH/1608/209 and CH/3000/2009).</p> <p>Legislation will be amended at the earliest opportunity to reflect this decision; in the meantime LAs should amend their caseload with reference to paragraph 18 schedule 7 of the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000.</p> <p>As the original decision was based on an error of law the LA should supersede the decision using Regulation 7(2) (b) of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 2001.</p> <p>In turn, Regulation 8 (8) determines that the superseding decision will be effective from the date of the relevant determination which in this case is 24<sup>th</sup> June 2010.</p>			
<p><b>Suggested Action</b> Ensure all staff are made aware of the changes outlined in the circular.</p> <p>LAs should consider how they are going to identify the LHA cases where a foster child is present and amend the changes as advised.</p>			
<b>Other References:</b>		G3/2009 CH/1608/2009 GH/3000/2009	