



Social Security Act 1986

1986 CHAPTER 50

PART II

INCOME-RELATED BENEFITS

General

20 Income-related benefits

- (1) Prescribed schemes shall provide for the following benefits (in this Act referred to as "income-related benefits")—
 - (a) income support;
 - (b) family credit; and
 - (c) housing benefit.
- (2) The Secretary of State shall make copies of schemes prescribed under subsection (1) (a) or (b) above available for public inspection at local offices of the Department of Health and Social Security at all reasonable hours without payment.
- (3) A person in Great Britain is entitled to income support if—
 - (a) he is of or over the age of 16 ;
 - (b) he has no income or his income does not exceed the applicable amount;
 - (c) he is not engaged in remunerative work and, if he is a member of a married or unmarried couple, the other member is not so engaged; and
 - (d) except in such circumstances as may be prescribed—
 - (i) he is available for employment;
 - (ii) he is not receiving relevant education.
- (4) Circumstances may be prescribed in which a person must not only satisfy the condition specified in subsection (3)(d)(i) above but also be registered in the prescribed manner for employment.

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- (5) Subject to regulations under section 51(1)(a) below, a person in Great Britain is entitled to family credit if, when the claim for it is made or is treated as made—
- (a) his income—
 - (i) does not exceed the applicable amount; or
 - (ii) exceeds it, but only by such an amount that there is an amount remaining if the deduction for which section 21(3) below provides is made;
 - (b) he or, if he is a member of a married or unmarried couple, he or the other member of the couple, is engaged and normally engaged in remunerative work; and
 - (c) he or, if he is a member of a married or unmarried couple, he or the other member, is responsible for a member of the same household who is a child or a person of a prescribed description.
- (6) Family credit shall be payable for a period of 26 weeks or such other period as may be prescribed, beginning with the week in which a claim for it is made or is treated as made and, subject to regulations, an award of family credit and the rate at which it is payable shall not be affected by any change of circumstances during that period.
- (7) A person is entitled to housing benefit if—
- (a) he is liable to make payments in respect of a dwelling in Great Britain which he occupies as his home ;
 - (b) there is an appropriate maximum housing benefit in his case; and
 - (c) either—
 - (i) he has no income or his income does not exceed the applicable amount; or
 - (ii) his income exceeds that amount, but only by so much that there is an amount remaining if the deduction for which section 21(5) below provides is made.
- (8) In subsection (7) above " payments in respect of a dwelling " means such payments as may be prescribed, but the power to prescribe payments does not include power to prescribe mortgage payments or, in relation to Scotland, payments under heritable securities.
- (9) Except in prescribed circumstances the entitlement of one member of a family to any one income-related benefit excludes entitlement to that benefit for any other member for the same period.
- (10) Regulations may provide that an award of family credit shall terminate—
- (a) if a person who was a member of the family at the date of the claim becomes a member of another family and some member of that family is entitled to family credit; or
 - (b) if income support becomes payable in respect of a person who was a member of the family at the date of the claim for family credit.
- (11) In this Part of this Act—
- " child " means a person under the age of 16 ;
 - " family " means—
 - (a) a married or unmarried couple;

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(b) a married or unmarried couple and a member of the same household for whom one of them is or both are responsible and who is a child or a person of a prescribed description;

(c) except in prescribed circumstances, a person who is not a member of a married or unmarried couple and a member of the same household for whom that person is responsible and who is a child or a person of a prescribed description;

" married couple" means a man and woman who are married to each other and are members of the same household;

" unmarried couple " means a man and woman who are not married to each other but are living together as husband and wife otherwise than in prescribed circumstances.

(12) Regulations may make provision for the purposes of this Part of this Act—

- (a) as to circumstances in which a person is to be treated as being or not being in Great Britain;
- (b) continuing a person's entitlement to benefit during periods of temporary absence from Great Britain;
- (c) as to what is or is not to be treated as remunerative work or as employment;
- (d) as to circumstances in which a person is or is not to be treated as engaged or normally engaged in remunerative work or available for employment;
- (e) as to what is or is not to be treated as relevant education;
- (f) as to circumstances in which a person is or is not to be treated as receiving relevant education ;
- (g) as to circumstances in which a person is or is not to be treated as occupying a dwelling as his home;
- (h) for treating any person who is liable to make payments in respect of a dwelling as if he were not so liable;
- (i) for treating any person who is not liable to make payments in respect of a dwelling as if he were so liable;
- (j) for treating as included in a dwelling any land used for the purposes of the dwelling ;
- (k) as to circumstances in which persons are to be treated as being or not being members of the same household;
- (l) as to circumstances in which one person is to be treated as responsible or not responsible for another.

21 Amount etc.

(1) Where a person is entitled to income support—

- (a) if he has no income, the amount shall be the applicable amount; and
- (b) if he has income, the amount shall be the difference between his income and the applicable amount.

(2) Where a person is entitled to family credit by virtue of section 20(5)(a)(i) above, the amount shall be the amount which is the appropriate maximum family credit in his case.

(3) Where a person is entitled to family credit by virtue of section 20(5)(a)(ii) above, the amount shall be what remains after the deduction from the appropriate maximum

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family credit of a prescribed percentage of the excess of his income over the applicable amount

- (4) Where a person is entitled to housing benefit by virtue of section 20(7)(c)(i) above, the amount shall be the amount which is the appropriate maximum housing benefit in his case.
- (5) Where a person is entitled to housing benefit by virtue of section 20(7)(c)(ii) above, the amount shall be what remains after the deduction from the appropriate maximum housing benefit of prescribed percentages of the excess of his income over the applicable amount.
- (6) Regulations shall prescribe the manner in which—
 - (a) the appropriate maximum family credit;
 - (b) the appropriate maximum housing benefit,are to be determined in any case.
- (7) Where the amount of any income-related benefit would be less than a prescribed amount, it shall not be payable except in prescribed circumstances.

22 Calculation

- (1) The applicable amount shall be such amount or the aggregate of such amounts as may be prescribed.
- (2) The power to prescribe applicable amounts conferred by subsection (1) above includes power to prescribe nil as an applicable amount.
- (3) In relation to income support and housing benefit the applicable amount for a severely disabled person shall include an amount in respect of his being a severely disabled person.
- (4) Regulations may specify circumstances in which persons are to be treated as being or as not being severely disabled.
- (5) Where a person claiming an income-related benefit is a member of a family, the income and capital of any member of that family shall, except in prescribed circumstances, be treated as the income and capital of that person.
- (6) No person shall be entitled to an income-related benefit if his capital or a prescribed part of it exceeds the prescribed amount.
- (7) Regulations may provide that capital not exceeding the amount prescribed under subsection (6) above but exceeding a prescribed lower amount shall be treated, to a prescribed extent, as if it were income of a prescribed amount.
- (8) Income and capital shall be calculated or estimated in such manner as may be prescribed.
- (9) Circumstances may be prescribed in which—
 - (a) a person is treated as possessing capital or income which he does not possess ;
 - (b) capital or income which a person does possess is to be disregarded;
 - (c) income is to be treated as capital;
 - (d) capital is to be treated as income.

Income support

23 Trade disputes

- (1) This section applies to a person, other than a child or a person of a prescribed description—
 - (a) who is disqualified under section 19 of the Social Security Act 1975 for receiving unemployment benefit; or
 - (b) who would be so disqualified if otherwise entitled to that benefit,
except during any period shown by the person to be a period of incapacity for work by reason of disease or bodily or mental disablement or to be within the maternity period.
- (2) In subsection (1) above " the maternity period " means the period commencing at the beginning of the sixth week before the expected week of confinement and ending at the end of the seventh week after the week in which confinement takes place.
- (3) For the purpose of calculating income support—
 - (a) so long as this section applies to a person who is not a member of a family, the applicable amount shall be disregarded;
 - (b) so long as it applies to a person who is a member of a family but is not a member of a married or unmarried couple, the portion of the applicable amount which is included in respect of him shall be disregarded ;
 - (c) so long as it applies to one of the members of a married or unmarried couple—
 - (i) if the applicable amount consists only of an amount in respect of them, it shall be reduced to one-half ; and
 - (ii) if it includes other amounts, the portion of it which is included in respect of them shall be reduced to one-half and any further portion of it which is included in respect of the member of the couple to whom this section applies shall be disregarded ;
 - (d) so long as it applies to both the members of a married or unmarried couple—
 - (i) if neither of them is responsible for a child or person of a prescribed description who is a member of the same household, the applicable amount shall be disregarded; and
 - (ii) in any other case, the portion of the applicable amount which is included in respect of them and any further portion of it which is included in respect of either of them shall be disregarded.
- (4) Where a reduction under subsection (3)(c) above would not produce a sum which is a multiple of 5p, the reduction shall be to the nearest lower sum which is such a multiple.
- (5) Where this section applies to a person for any period, then, except so far as regulations provide otherwise—
 - (a) in calculating the entitlement to income support of that person or a member of his family the following shall be treated as his income and shall not be disregarded—
 - (i) any payment which he or a member of his family receives or is entitled to obtain by reason of the person to whom this section applies being without employment for that period; and
 - (ii) without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (i) above, any amount which becomes or would on an application duly made become available to him in that period by way of repayment of income tax

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- deducted from his emoluments in pursuance of section 204 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970; and
- (b) any payment by way of income support for that period or any part of it which apart from this paragraph would be made to him, or to a person whose applicable amount is aggregated with his—
- (i) shall not be made if the weekly rate of payment is equal to or less than the relevant sum; or
 - (ii) if it is more than the relevant sum, shall be at a weekly rate equal to the difference.
- (6) In subsection (5) above " the relevant sum " means the amount which immediately before this section comes into force is specified in section 6(1)(b) of the Social Security (No. 2) Act 1980 increased by the percentage by which any order under section 63 below which brings alterations in the rates of benefits into force on the day on which this section comes into force increases the sums specified in subsection (3) of that section.
- (7) If an order under section 63 below has the effect of increasing payments of income support, from the time when the order comes into force there shall be substituted, in subsection (5)(b) above, for the references to the sum for the time being mentioned in it references to a sum arrived at by—
- (a) increasing that sum by the percentage by which applicable amounts have been increased by the order; and
 - (b) if the sum as so increased is not a multiple of 50 pence, disregarding the remainder if it is 25 pence and, if it is not, rounding it up or down to the nearest 50 pence, and the order shall state the substituted sum.
- (8) If a person returns to work with the same employer after a period during which this section applies to him, then, until the end of the period of 15 days beginning with the day on which he returns to work with that employer, section 20(3) above shall have effect in relation to him as if the following paragraph were substituted for paragraph (c) —
- “(c) he is a member of a married or unmarried couple and the other member is not engaged in remunerative work; and”
- but any sum paid by way of income support for that period shall be recoverable in the prescribed manner from him or from any prescribed person.

24 Recovery of expenditure on benefit from person liable for maintenance

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, if income support is claimed by or in respect of a person whom another person is liable to maintain or paid to or in respect of such a person, the Secretary of State may make a complaint against the liable person to a magistrates' court for an order under this section.
- (2) Except in a case falling within subsection (3) below, this section does not apply where the person who is liable to be maintained is an illegitimate child of the liable person.
- (3) A case falls within this subsection if—
 - (a) the liable person is someone other than the child's father ; or
 - (b) the liable person is liable because he is a person such as is mentioned in section 26(3)(c) below.

- (4) On the hearing of a complaint under this section the court shall have regard to all the circumstances and, in particular, to the income of the liable person, and may order him to pay such sum, weekly or otherwise, as it may consider appropriate, except that in a case falling within section 26(3)(c) below that sum shall not include any amount which is not attributable to income support (whether paid before or after the making of the order).
- (5) In determining whether to order any payments to be made in respect of income support for any period before the complaint was made, or the amount of any such payments, the court shall disregard any amount by which the liable person's income exceeds the income which was his during that period.
- (6) Any payments ordered to be made under this section shall be made—
 - (a) to the Secretary of State in so far as they are attributable to any income support (whether paid before or after the making of the order);
 - (b) to the person claiming income support or (if different) the dependant; or
 - (c) to such other person as appears to the court expedient in the interests of the dependant.
- (7) An order under this section shall be enforceable as an affiliation order.
- (8) In the application of this section to Scotland, subsections (2), (3) and (7) shall be omitted and for the references to a complaint and to a magistrates' court there shall be substituted respectively references to an application and to the sheriff.
- (9) On an application under subsection (1) above a court in Scotland may make a finding as to the parentage of a child for the purpose of establishing whether a person is, for the purposes of this section and section 26 below, liable to maintain him.

25 Affiliation orders

- (1) If—
 - (a) income support is claimed by or in respect of an illegitimate child or paid in respect of such a child; and
 - (b) no affiliation order is in force ; and
 - (c) the case does not fall within section 24(3) above,the Secretary of State may, within three years from the time of the claim or payment, make application to a justice of the peace appointed for the commission area (within the meaning of the Justices of the Peace Act 1979) in which the mother of the child resides for a summons to be served under section 1 of the Affiliation Proceedings Act 1957.
- (2) In any proceedings on an application under subsection (1) above the court shall hear such evidence as the Secretary of State may produce, and shall in all respects, subject to the provisions of subsection (3) below, proceed as on an application made by the mother under section 1 of the Affiliation Proceedings Act 1957.
- (3) An affiliation order—
 - (a) made on an application by the Secretary of State under subsection (1) above; or
 - (b) made on an application made by the Secretary of State in proceedings brought by the mother of the child under section 1 of the Affiliation Proceedings Act 1957,

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may be made so as to provide that the payments or a part of the payments to be made under the order shall, instead of being made to a person entitled under section 5 of that Act, be made to the Secretary of State or to such other person as the court may direct.

- (4) Any affiliation order, whether made before or after the commencement of this section, may, on the application of the Secretary of State, be varied so as to provide for the making of payments, or part of them, as mentioned in subsection (3) above; and an application by the Secretary of State under this subsection may be made—
- (a) notwithstanding that the mother has died and no person has been appointed to have the custody of the child; and
 - (b) where the child is not in the care of the mother and she is not contributing to his maintenance, without making her a party to the proceedings.
- (5) An affiliation order which provides for the making of payments, or part of them, as mentioned in subsection (3) above, may, on the application of the mother of the child, be varied so as to provide that the payments shall be made to a person entitled under section 5 of the Affiliation Proceedings Act 1957.

26 Failure to maintain-general

- (1) If—
- (a) any person persistently refuses or neglects to maintain himself or any person whom he is liable to maintain; and
 - (b) in consequence of his refusal or neglect income support is paid to or in respect of him or such a person,
- he shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to a fine of an amount not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale or to both.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1) above a person shall not be taken to refuse or neglect to maintain himself or any other person by reason only of anything done or omitted in furtherance of a trade dispute.
- (3) For the purposes of this section and sections 24 and 25 above—
- (a) a man shall be liable to maintain his wife and his children;
 - (b) a woman shall be liable to maintain her husband and her children; and
 - (c) a person shall be liable to maintain another person throughout any period in respect of which the first-mentioned person has, on or after 23rd May 1980 (the date of the passing of the Social Security Act 1980) and either alone or jointly with a further person, given an undertaking in writing in pursuance of immigration rules within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971 to be responsible for the maintenance and accommodation of the other person.
- (4) In subsection (3) above—
- (a) the reference to a man's children includes a reference to children of whom he has been adjudged to be the father; and
 - (b) the reference to a woman's children includes a reference to her illegitimate children.
- (5) Subsection (4) above does not apply to Scotland, and in the application of subsection (3) above to Scotland any reference to children shall be construed as a reference to children whether or not their parents have ever been married to one another.

- (6) A document bearing a certificate which—
- (a) is signed by a person authorised in that behalf by the Secretary of State; and
 - (b) states that the document apart from the certificate is, or is a copy of, such an undertaking as is mentioned in subsection (3)(c) above,
- shall be conclusive of the undertaking in question for the purpose of this section and section 24 above; and a certificate purporting to be so signed shall be deemed to be so signed until the contrary is proved.

27 Prevention of duplication of payments

- (1) Where—
- (a) a payment by way of prescribed income is made after the date which is the prescribed date in relation to the payment; and
 - (b) it is determined that an amount which has been paid by way of income support would not have been paid if the payment had been made on the prescribed date,
- the Secretary of State shall be entitled to recover that amount from the person to whom it was paid.
- (2) Where—
- (a) a prescribed payment which apart from this subsection falls to be made from public funds in the United Kingdom or under the law of any other member State is not made on or before the date which is the prescribed date in relation to the payment; and
 - (b) it is determined that an amount ("the relevant amount") has been paid by way of income support that would not have been paid if the payment mentioned in paragraph (a) above had been made on the prescribed date,
- then—
- (i) in the case of a payment from public funds in the United Kingdom, the authority responsible for making it may abate it by the relevant amount; and
 - (ii) in the case of any other payment, the Secretary of State shall be entitled to receive the relevant amount out of the payment.
- (3) Where—
- (a) a person (in this subsection referred to as A) is entitled to any prescribed benefit for any period in respect of another person (in this subsection referred to as B); and
 - (b) either—
 - (i) B has received income support for that period ; or
 - (ii) B was, during that period, a member of the same family as some person other than A who received income support for that period; and
 - (c) the amount of the income support has been determined on the basis that A has not made payments for the maintenance of B at a rate equal to or exceeding the amount of the prescribed benefit,
- the amount of the prescribed benefit may, at the discretion of the authority administering it, be abated by the amount by which the amounts paid by way of income support exceed what it is determined that they would have been had A, at the time the amount of the income support was determined, been making payments for the maintenance of B at a rate equal to the amount of the prescribed benefit.

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- (4) Where an amount could have been recovered by abatement by virtue of subsection (2) or (3) above but has not been so recovered, the Secretary of State may recover it otherwise than by way of abatement—
- (a) in the case of an amount which could have been recovered by virtue of subsection (2) above, from the person to whom it was paid; and
 - (b) in the case of an amount which could have been recovered by virtue of subsection (3) above, from the person to whom the prescribed benefit in question was paid.
- (5) Where a payment is made in a currency other than sterling, its value in sterling shall be determined for the purposes of this section in accordance with regulations.

Housing benefit

28 Arrangements for housing benefit

- (1) Housing benefit provided by virtue of a scheme under section 20(1) above (in this Act referred to as "the housing benefit scheme")—
- (a) is to be in the form of a rate rebate funded and administered by the appropriate rating authority, if it is in respect of payments by way of rates;
 - (b) is to be in the form of a rent rebate funded and administered by the appropriate housing authority, if it is in respect of payments, other than payments by way of rates, to be made to a housing authority; and
 - (c) is in any other case to be in the form of a rent allowance funded and administered by the appropriate local authority.
- (2) Regulations may provide that in prescribed cases a payment made by a person entitled to a rent allowance shall be treated for the purposes of subsection (1)(a) above as being, to such extent as may be prescribed, a payment by way of rates.
- (3) For the purposes of this section in its application to any dwelling—
- (a) the appropriate rating authority is the rating authority for the area in which it is situated;
 - (b) the appropriate housing authority is the housing authority to whom the occupier of the dwelling is liable to make payments; and
 - (c) the appropriate local authority is the local authority for the area in which the dwelling is situated.
- (4) Authorities may agree that one shall carry out responsibilities relating to housing benefit on another's behalf.
- (5) Circumstances may be prescribed in which a rate rebate may be treated as if it fell to be paid as a rent allowance.
- (6) An authority may modify any part of the housing benefit scheme administered by the authority—
- (a) so as to provide for disregarding, in determining a person's income (whether he is the occupier of a dwelling or any other person whose income falls to be aggregated with that of the occupier of a dwelling), the whole or part of any war disablement pension or war widow's pension payable to that person ;
 - (b) to such extent in other respects as may be prescribed,
- and any such modifications may be adopted by resolution of an authority.

- (7) Modifications other than such modifications as are mentioned in subsection (6)(a) above shall be so framed as to secure that, in the estimate of the authority adopting them, the total of the rebates or allowances which will be granted by the authority in any year will not exceed the permitted total of rebates or allowances for that year.
- (8) An authority who have adopted modifications may by resolution revoke or vary them.
- (9) If the housing benefit scheme includes power for an authority to exercise a discretion in awarding housing benefit, the authority shall not exercise that discretion so that the total of the rebates or allowances granted by them in any year exceeds the permitted total of rebates or allowances for that year.
- (10) In relation to any authority the permitted total of rebates or allowances for any year shall be calculated, in the manner specified by an order made by the Secretary of State, by reference to the total housing benefit granted by that authority during the year, less such deductions as are specified in the order.

29 Adjudication and overpayments

- (1) Regulations shall require authorities to notify a person who has claimed housing benefit of their determination of that claim.
- (2) Any such notification shall be given in such form as may be prescribed.
- (3) Regulations shall make provision for reviews of determinations relating to housing benefit.
- (4) Except where regulations otherwise provide, any amount of housing benefit paid in excess of entitlement may be recovered in such manner as may be prescribed either by the Secretary of State or by the authority which paid the benefit.
- (5) Regulations may require such an authority to recover such an amount in such circumstances as may be prescribed.
- (6) An amount recoverable under this section is in all cases recoverable from the person to whom it was paid; but, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, it may also be recovered from such other person as may be prescribed.
- (7) Any amount recoverable under this section may, without prejudice to any other method of recovery, be recovered by deduction from prescribed benefits.

30 Housing benefit finance

- (1) For each year the Secretary of State shall pay—
 - (a) a subsidy to be known as " rate rebate subsidy " to each rating authority;
 - (b) a subsidy to be known as " rent rebate subsidy " to each housing authority; and
 - (c) a subsidy to be known as " rent allowance subsidy " to each local authority.
- (2) The subsidy under subsection (1) above which is to be paid to an authority—
 - (a) shall be calculated, in the manner specified by an order made by the Secretary of State, by reference to the total housing benefit granted by that authority during the year with any additions specified in the order but subject to any deductions so specified; and

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- (b) shall be subject to deduction of any amount which the Secretary of State considers it unreasonable to meet out of money provided by way of subsidy under subsection (1) above.
- (3) For each year the Secretary of State may pay to an authority as part of the subsidy under subsection (1) above an additional sum calculated, in the manner specified by an order made by the Secretary of State, in respect of the costs of administering housing benefit.
- (4) The Secretary of State may pay to an authority, for the financial year 1987-88, a subsidy, calculated in the manner specified by an order made by the Secretary of State, in connection with the costs incurred by the authority in implementing the housing benefit scheme.
- (5) Rent rebate subsidy shall be payable—
- (a) in the case of a local authority in England and Wales—
 - (i) for the credit of their Housing Revenue Account to the extent that it is calculated by reference to Housing Revenue Account rebates and any costs of administering such rebates; and
 - (ii) for the credit of their general rate fund to the extent that it is not so calculated;
 - (b) in the case of a local authority in Scotland, for the credit of their rent rebate account;
 - (c) in the case of a new town corporation in England and Wales or the Development Board for Rural Wales, for the credit of their housing account; and
 - (d) in the case of a new town corporation in Scotland or the Scottish Special Housing Association, for the credit of the account to which rent rebates granted by them are debited.
- (6) Every local authority shall make for each year a rate fund contribution to their Housing Revenue Account of an amount equal to the difference between—
- (a) so much of their rent rebate subsidy for the year as is credited to that Account; and
 - (b) the total of—
 - (i) the Housing Revenue Account rebates granted by them during the year; and
 - (ii) the cost of administering such rebates.
- (7) Rent allowance subsidy shall be payable—
- (a) in the case of a local authority in England and Wales, for the credit of their general rate fund ; and
 - (b) in the case of a local authority in Scotland, for the credit of their rent allowance account.
- (8) Subsidy under this section shall be payable by the Secretary of State at such time and in such manner as the Treasury may direct, but subject—
- (a) to the making of a claim for it in such form and containing such particulars as the Secretary of State may from time to time determine; and
 - (b) to such conditions as to records, certificates, audit or otherwise as the Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, impose.

- (9) The amount of any subsidy payable to an authority shall be calculated to the nearest pound, by disregarding an odd amount of 50 pence or less and by treating an odd amount exceeding 50 pence as a whole pound.
- (10) If an order made by the Secretary of State so provides—
- (a) the rate fund contribution under subsection (6) above made by a local authority for any year; and
 - (b) the rent allowances granted by a local authority during any year,
- or such proportion of them as may be calculated in the manner specified by the order, shall not count as relevant expenditure for the purposes of section 54 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 (rate support grant).

31 Information

- (1) The Secretary of State may supply to authorities such information of a prescribed description obtained by reason of the exercise of any of his functions under the benefit Acts as they may require in connection with any of their functions relating to housing benefit.
- (2) Authorities shall supply to the Secretary of State such information of a prescribed description obtained by reason of the exercise of their functions relating to housing benefit as he may require in connection with any of his functions under the benefit Acts.
- (3) It shall also be the duty of an authority to supply the Secretary of State, in the prescribed manner and within the prescribed time—
- (a) with such information as he may require concerning their performance of any of their functions relating to housing benefit; and
 - (b) with such information as he may require to enable him—
 - (i) to prepare estimates of likely future amounts of housing benefit expenditure ; and
 - (ii) to decide questions relating to the development of housing benefit policy.
- (4) Every authority granting housing benefit—
- (a) shall take such steps as appear to them appropriate for the purpose of securing that persons who may be entitled to housing benefit from the authority become aware that they may be entitled to' it; and
 - (b) shall make copies of the housing benefit scheme, with any modifications adopted by them under section 28 above, available for public inspection at their principal office at all reasonable hours without payment.
- (5) In order to assist authorities to give effect to the housing benefit scheme, where a rent is registered under Part IV of the Rent Act 1977. there shall be noted on the register the amount (if any) of the registered rent which, in the opinion of the rent officer or rent assessment committee, is fairly attributable to the provision of services, except any amount which is negligible in the opinion of the officer or, as the case may be, the committee.