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STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**2006 No. 213**

**The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006**

**PART 12**

**Payments**

**Time and manner of payment**

**91.**—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3) and regulations 92 to 98 (frequency of payment of a rent allowance, and payment on account of a rent allowance, payment provisions, offsetting) the relevant authority shall pay housing benefit to which a person is entitled under these Regulations at such time and in such manner as is appropriate, having regard to—

- (a) the times at which and the frequency with which a person's liability to make payment of rent arises; and
- (b) the reasonable needs and convenience of the person entitled thereto.

(2) Where a person's entitlement to housing benefit is less than £1 weekly the relevant authority may pay that benefit at 6 monthly intervals.

(3) Subject to regulations 92 to 97 (frequency of payment of and payment on account of a rent allowance, payment provisions), every authority shall make the first payment of any housing benefit awarded by it within 14 days of the receipt of the claim at the designated office or, if that is not reasonably practical, as soon as possible thereafter.

**Frequency of payment of a rent allowance**

**92.**—(1) Subject to the following provisions of this regulation any rent allowance other than a payment made in accordance with regulation 91(2) or (3) or 93 (time and manner of payment, payment on account of rent allowance) shall be paid at intervals of 2 or 4 weeks or one month or, with the consent of the person entitled, at intervals greater than one month.

(2) Except in a case to which paragraph (3) applies, any payment of a rent allowance shall be made, in so far as it is practicable to do so, at the end of the period in respect of which it is made.

(3) Except in a case to which regulation 96(2) applies and subject to paragraph (4), this paragraph applies where payment of a rent allowance is being made to a landlord (which for these purposes has the same meaning as in regulations 95 and 96 (payments to a landlord)), when that payment shall be made—

- (a) at intervals of 4 weeks; and
  - (b) at the end of the period in respect of which it is made.
- (4) Where paragraph (3) applies—
- (a) in a case where the liability in respect of which the rent allowance is paid is monthly, the authority may make payment at intervals of 1 month;
  - (b) in a case where the authority is paying a rent allowance to a landlord in respect of more than one claimant, then the first such payment in respect of any claimant may be made to

that landlord at such lesser interval as that authority considers is in the best interest of the efficient administration of housing benefit.

(5) Except in a case to which paragraph (3) applies, where a person's weekly entitlement to a rent allowance is more than £2 he may require payment at two weekly intervals and the relevant authority shall pay at two weekly intervals in such a case.

(6) Except in a case to which paragraph (3) applies, the relevant authority may pay a rent allowance at weekly intervals where either—

- (a) it considers that unless the rent allowance is paid at weekly intervals an overpayment is likely to occur; or
- (b) the person entitled is liable to pay his rent weekly and it considers that it is in his interest that his allowance be paid weekly.

(7) Subject to paragraphs (2), (3) and (5), the relevant authority may pay a rent allowance to a student once a term.

### **Payment on account of a rent allowance**

**93.**—(1) Where it is impracticable for the relevant authority to make a decision on a claim for a rent allowance within 14 days of the claim for it having been made and that impracticability does not arise out of the failure of the claimant, without good cause, to furnish such information, certificates, documents or evidence as the authority reasonably requires and has requested or which has been requested by the Secretary of State, the authority shall make a payment on account of any entitlement to a rent allowance of such amount as it considers reasonable having regard to—

- (a) such information which may at the time be available to it concerning the claimant's circumstances; and
- (b) any relevant determination made by a rent officer in exercise of the Housing Act functions.

(2) The notice of award of any payment on account of a rent allowance made under paragraph (1) shall contain a notice to the effect that if on the subsequent decision of the claim the person is not entitled to a rent allowance, or is entitled to an amount of rent allowance less than the amount of the payment on account, the whole of the amount paid on account or the excess of that amount over the entitlement to an allowance, as the case may be, will be recoverable from the person to whom the payment on account was made.

(3) Where on the basis of the subsequent decision the amount of rent allowance payable differs from the amount paid on account under paragraph (1), future payments of rent allowance shall be increased or reduced to take account of any underpayment or, as the case may be, overpayment.

### **Payment to be made to a person entitled**

**94.**—(1) Subject to regulations 95 to 97 (payment to landlords, payment on death) and the following provisions of this regulation, payment of any rent allowance to which a person is entitled shall be made to that person.

(2) Where a person other than a person who is entitled to a rent allowance made the claim and that first person is a person referred to in regulation 82(2), (3) or (5) (persons appointed to act for a person unable to act), payment may be made to that person.

(3) A person entitled to a rent allowance, although able to act on his own behalf, may request in writing that the appropriate authority make payments to a person, who if a natural person must be aged 18 or more, nominated by him, and the authority may make payments to that person.

**Circumstances in which payment is to be made to a landlord**

**95.**—(1) Subject to paragraph (2) and paragraph 8(4) of Schedule A1(1) (treatment of claims for housing benefit by refugees), a payment of rent allowance shall be made to a landlord (and in this regulation the “landlord” includes a person to whom rent is payable by the person entitled to that allowance)—

- (a) where under Regulations made under the Administration Act an amount of income support or a jobseeker’s allowance payable to the claimant or his partner is being paid direct to the landlord; or
- (b) where sub-paragraph (a) does not apply and the person is in arrears of an amount equivalent to 8 weeks or more of the amount he is liable to pay his landlord as rent, except where it is in the overriding interest of the claimant not to make direct payments to the landlord.

(2) Any payment of rent allowance made to a landlord pursuant to this regulation or to regulation 96 (circumstances in which payment may be made to a landlord) shall be to discharge, in whole or in part, the liability of the claimant to pay rent to that landlord in respect of the dwelling concerned, except in so far as—

- (a) the claimant had no entitlement to the whole or part of that rent allowance so paid to his landlord; and
- (b) the overpayment of rent allowance resulting was recovered in whole or in part from that landlord.

(3) Where the relevant authority is not satisfied that the landlord is a fit and proper person to be the recipient of a payment of rent allowance no such payment shall be made direct to him under paragraph (1).

**Circumstances in which payment may be made to a landlord**

**96.**—(1) Subject to paragraph 8(4) of Schedule A1(2) (treatment of claims for housing benefit by refugees), where regulation 95 (circumstances in which payment is to be made to a landlord) does not apply but subject to paragraph (3) of this regulation, a payment of a rent allowance may nevertheless be made to a person’s landlord where—

- (a) the person has requested or consented to such payment;
- (b) payment to the landlord is in the interest of the claimant and his family;
- (c) the person has ceased to reside in the dwelling in respect of which the allowance was payable and there are outstanding payments of rent but any payment under this sub-paragraph shall be limited to an amount equal to the amount of rent outstanding.

(2) Without prejudice to the power in paragraph (1), in any case where in the opinion of the authority—

- (a) the claimant has not already discharged his liability to pay his landlord for the period in respect of which any payment is to be made; and
- (b) it would be in the interests of the efficient administration of housing benefit,

a first payment of a rent allowance following the making of a decision on a claim or a supersession under paragraph 4 of Schedule 7 to the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000(3) may be made, in whole or in part, by sending to the claimant an instrument of payment payable to that landlord.

(1) See the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Consequential Provisions) Regulations 2006 (S.I. 2006/217), regulation 7 and Schedule 4, paragraph 2 for regulation 10A and Schedule A1 (claims by refugees).

(2) See the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Consequential Provisions) Regulations 2006 (S.I. 2006/217), regulation 7 and Schedule 4, paragraph 2 for regulation 10A and Schedule A1 (claims by refugees).

(3) 2000 c. 19.

(3) In a case where the relevant authority is not satisfied that the landlord is a fit and proper person to be the recipient of a claimant's rent allowance, the authority may either—

- (a) not make direct payments to the landlord in accordance with paragraph (1); or
- (b) make such payments to the landlord where the authority is satisfied that it is nonetheless in the best interests of the claimant and his family that the payments be made.

(4) In this regulation "landlord" has the same meaning as in regulation 95 and paragraph (2) of that regulation shall have effect for the purposes of this regulation.

### **Payment on death of the person entitled**

**97.**—(1) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (5) where the person entitled to an allowance has died the relevant authority shall make payment either to his personal representative or, where there is none, his next of kin if aged 16 or over.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1) "next of kin" means in England and Wales the persons who would take beneficially on an intestacy and in Scotland the persons entitled to the moveable estate on intestacy.

(3) A payment under paragraph (1) or (5) shall not be made unless the landlord, the personal representative or the next of kin, as the case may be, makes written application for the payment of any sum of benefit to which the deceased was entitled, and such written application is sent to or delivered to the relevant authority at its designated office within 12 months of the deceased's death or such longer period as the authority may allow in any particular case.

(4) The authority may dispense with strict proof of title of any person claiming under paragraph (3) and the receipt of such a person shall be a good discharge to the authority for any sum so paid.

(5) Subject to paragraph (3), where the relevant authority determines, before the death of the person first mentioned in paragraph (1), that a rent allowance was payable to his landlord in accordance with regulation 95 or 96, that authority shall pay to that landlord so much of that allowance as does not exceed the amount of rent outstanding at the date of the person's death.

### **Offsetting**

**98.**—(1) Where a person has been paid a sum of housing benefit under a decision which is subsequently revised or further revised, any sum paid in respect of a period covered by a subsequent decision shall be offset against arrears of entitlement under the subsequent decision except to the extent that the sum exceeds the arrears and shall be treated as properly paid on account of them.

(2) Where an amount has been deducted under regulation 104(1) (sums to be deducted in calculating recoverable overpayments) an equivalent sum shall be offset against any arrears of entitlement under the subsequent decision except to the extent that the sum exceeds the arrears and shall be treated as properly paid on account of them.

(3) No amount may be offset under paragraph (1) which has been determined to be an overpayment within the meaning of regulation 99 (meaning of overpayment).