

CAPITA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Training and

development solutions



Specialist training, development and consultancy solutions for revenues, benefits and customer services staff

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Training and development solutions

Capita Local Government Services (LGS), part of the Capita Group Plc, provides specialist support, advice and resources to local authorities throughout the UK. Our Assessment, Policy and Training (APT) Team provides a full range of training, development and consultancy services ranging from comprehensive new starter programmes, including practical on-the-job coaching and systems training, through to specialist projects for the development of experienced staff.

As a centralised resource, Capita APT provides its services internally, for long term Capita LGS contracts, and also externally, to local authorities across the UK.

Our trainers

Our trainers have a wide range of experience and backgrounds, including former assessment practitioners, and are based at various locations across the UK, including our Investors in People accredited shared service centres at Blackburn, Bromley and Mendip.

Members of the training team have Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) accreditation which ensures that training sessions follow industry best practice.

Our commitment to delivering excellent training

At Capita LGS we believe our staff are our strongest asset and we recognise that the key to any successful organisation is the continuous development of its people. Our approach provides staff with the complete set of skills and knowledge they need through delivering integrated training on:

- regulations, primary legislation and DWP guidance
- local procedural and service requirements that determine how services are delivered in practice
- the use of relevant IT systems that allow staff to put their knowledge into practice.

We use a variety of teaching methods to ensure that trainees are actively engaged throughout all courses and programmes. We also provide tailored, relevant feedback to managers on the performance of their staff – especially for new starter programmes as these include comprehensive testing procedures.

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For our customer care, employee, team leader and management development programmes, we have developed a unique multi-sensory training methodology which is driven by colour, music, fragrance and toys. This approach caters for all learning styles and because participants have so much fun their energy and focus remains high throughout the training.

Expert policy and consultancy services

Local authorities often face challenges in ensuring that staff are kept up-to-date with changes and that processes are continually reviewed to reflect best practice. Capita LGS works with councils of all types to bring about tangible operational improvements by providing policy and consultancy services which range from developing solutions to managing the practical problems associated with day-to-day service delivery.

Capita LGS' policy and consultancy services concentrate on the provision of specialist advice to support both internal Capita LGS sites, as well as other local authorities. The range of projects covered includes:

- regular updates on DWP guidance and legislation that assess the operational and financial impact of changes
- process reviews focusing on improving customer service, increasing collection and streamlining the claims process
- devising, reviewing and updating local procedure manuals
- implementation of standard processes for local authority consortia
- specialist staff to support the maximisation of subsidy, the provision of policy documentation, increasing overpayment recovery and reviewing fraud procedures

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- assisting with the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) approach. Capita LGS' KLOE benchmarking exercise focuses on quantifying how a council's current benefits service compares to the Audit Commission's standards and identifies initiatives that will improve the council's KLOE score. By benchmarking benefits services against the KLOE standards, councils are able to:
 - ensure that managers and staff are fully aware of the approach and requirements of the KLOE method
 - identify how their benefits services currently perform against the requirements
 - understand the challenges and what needs to be achieved in order to improve
 - plan for the future development of their benefits services
 - prepare for future Audit Commission inspections.

Our trainees

We typically deliver training for the following revenues and benefits staff:

- Assessment staff – Benefits Assessors, Senior Assessors and Team Leaders who undertake quality assurance, checking etc
- Pre-assessment staff – dedicated Pre-assessment Team members, or those staff who are involved in making pre-assessment decisions on a rota basis along with other duties
- Frontline staff – customer services staff, Contact Centre/Telephone Advisors, reception staff or generic advisors involved in giving HB/CTB advice.

We also offer a range of specialist customer care, employee, team leader and management development courses for all staff across the Capita LGS business, including financial services and IT staff.

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Case study

London Borough of Lambeth and Capita LGS: delivering a tailored and efficient new-starter training programme

Background

Lambeth is one of the most densely populated inner-London boroughs and with a population of around 270,000 it is the second largest London borough. In 2007, approximately 17% of Lambeth residents were dependent on benefits. With a caseload of more than 40,000, the revenues and benefits service provides income for approximately 34% of households in the borough. For many years Lambeth Council had a large contingent of temporary staff working in its benefits department and with the ever-increasing caseload came the decision to recruit a large number of new permanent assessment staff – providing local jobs for local people.

The challenge

The challenge from the outset was to train 24 new Assessment Officers in all aspects of the job, including; legislation, systems, local processes and procedures, as quickly as possible. Though Lambeth already had an excellent existing in-house training team, resourcing a training programme for so many new assessment staff while maintaining existing service levels – and without creating a negative impact – would have proved near impossible for the Council to do on its own. Because the group of trainees was so large, it needed to be split up into smaller groups which could be trained simultaneously on the same material in order to create the most effective and efficient learning environment.

The solution

Capita LGS' dedicated training team; APT, was selected by Lambeth to deliver the tailored new-starter training programme. The APT team trainers all have vast experience of working in local government and therefore understand the challenges of working in a busy benefits department, enabling them to provide practical hands-on training teamed with extensive theoretical knowledge. The size of the APT Team made it possible to offer Lambeth three trainers at any one time to work with the three separate groups of trainees concurrently.

Following the initial consultation stage, a comprehensive training programme was created which included all the legislative theory and systems skills required for an assessment role, but which was also interspersed with practical on-the-job work processing of real cases. This step-by-step approach provided the most effective learning solution by allowing the trainees to combine theory and practical use of the benefits processing software.

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The trainees undertook numerous exercises throughout the course of the programme and sat tests at the end of each module, with all the scores fed back to Lambeth. The trainees also had continuous one-to-one meetings with their trainers, in which they would cover learning ability, aptitude, team participation, attendance/time-keeping and general attitude. The feedback was then presented to the various Team Managers and the training team at the Council. This ongoing communication process allowed Lambeth to monitor the progress of the individual trainees throughout the lifespan of the programme.

The results

When the training programme had been completed, the APT Trainers prepared a final report for Lambeth which provided a break-down of each trainee's scores for every module and contained significant individual feedback on each trainee as well as overall results for the group.

On completing the 13-week training course, the new starters:

- were capable of immediate independent processing work
- no longer required intensive support from their Team Managers
- were able to use all the necessary software systems
- were familiar with local work processes and procedures
- immediately increased productivity
- improved staff morale as team numbers were boosted
- enhanced overall service delivery
- had improved their overall knowledge and confidence.

Capita APT is proud to be working with Lambeth again in 2010 on the delivery of a 12-week new-starter programme for Benefits Assessors.

"The Council's ambition was to recruit and train 24 new entrants to be Benefits Assessors. The aim was to reduce costs, improve quality and add resilience to the assessment function. We required an innovative, cost effective and high quality solution to the training element, to give our new entrants the best chance of beginning a successful career with Lambeth. Capita LGS' training package achieved all of our aims, serving as an excellent launch pad to our new entrants' careers."

Tim Hillman-Brown, Head of Benefits, London Borough of Lambeth

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Employee, team leader and management development

We have a number of development programmes in place to help us support and develop our staff to ensure that they can achieve their personal and career growth aspirations. These range from appraisal and coaching workshops through to full residential team leader development programmes, which are specific to our business but can also be developed to suit an organisation's precise requirements.

Our management training programmes are designed to help managers become fully effective in their roles with a practical, relevant and developmental approach. Each programme includes case studies, management theories and practices, personal development plans and practical tools designed to help managers excel in their roles.

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"I attended the team leader development course and found it to be a hugely useful and enjoyable course. The subject matter was relevant to the job I do and pitched at just the right level."

Tom O'Brien, Capita Fraud Manager, Sheffield



Core competencies workshop

Who should attend?

This workshop is ideal for any Manager wishing to improve their understanding of the Core Competencies Framework used by Capita to manage performance.

Suitable for Managers new to performance management and also experienced Managers looking to increase their understanding.

Learning objectives

By the end of this session delegates will be able to:

- define what a competency is and how a framework is formulated
- describe why organisations use competency frameworks
- explain how the framework links to our business objectives
- illustrate how competencies and behaviours can be used when setting SMART objectives
- describe how competencies and behaviours can be measured as part of overall performance management
- explain how to encourage Individual development using competencies and behaviours as a benchmark
- define actions to take back to the workplace to help make a difference.

Attendees will learn

- how to use competencies as part of the review and appraisal processes
- how to set SMART objectives and how to link competencies to business objectives
- the benefits a competency framework brings to both the individual and the business.

Course length

Half a day. A tailored, shorter version of this course can also be delivered to all team members.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Appraisal workshop (see page 11).

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Appraisal workshop

Who should attend?

This workshop is suitable for any Supervisor, Team Leader or Manager whose job role involves conducting appraisals.

Ideal for both the new Manager and also the more experienced Manager looking to improve their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- set SMART objectives for their team members
- list the full range of performance measures available to them
- review and measure performance of staff objectively
- give feedback objectively to enable the right outcome
- identify individual development needs
- plan a range of learning activities to address individual development needs
- incorporate core competencies and behaviours into all aspects of appraising performance and developing individuals.

Attendees will learn

- why to undertake performance management
- what SMART objectives are and how to set them
- how to measure performance
- what development needs are and how to identify them
- how to develop and improve individuals
- how to give developmental feedback to improve performance
- how to use core competencies throughout the appraisal process.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Coaching for performance (see page 32)

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Team leader development programme

Who should attend?

This two day course is designed to enhance the skills of any Supervisor or Team Leader responsible for leading a team and developing people.

Suited to new Team Leaders and staff identified with the potential for future management roles and is also ideal for experienced Team Leaders wishing to improve their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- understand their roles as Team Leaders
- understand the competencies and behaviours required of a Team Leader
- use a range of tools and techniques to help them lead their teams effectively
- identify their own development needs and think about ways of addressing them.

Attendees will learn

- how to build team spirit and focus on achieving their objectives
- how to communicate with their teams and run effective team meetings
- why they need to undertake appraisals and performance management
- what the core competencies are and how to use them
- how to prioritise work loads and manage time effectively
- how to delegate effectively and be more assertive
- the importance of commercial awareness
- how to deal with conflict within the team
- the principles of coaching.

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Appraisal workshop (see page 11)

Coaching for performance (see page 32)

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Fish!

Who should attend?

This workshop is ideal for staff who would like to deal with changes and challenges in a more productive way.

Suitable for all members of staff including Supervisors, Team Leaders and Managers, as well as those that work in administrative and customer-facing roles.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- understand that attitudes are not in-built but rather involve choice on their part
- recognise how the attitudes they choose to adopt can affect both their professional and personal lives
- realise the benefits to approaching changes and challenges with a positive 'can do' attitude
- understand how our attitudes can affect others.

Attendees will learn

- how the Dr Colmba McLaughlin Behaviour Cycle can be used to alter their reactions
- the affect that their attitude can have on the success of events and changes at work
- how to alter their reactions to perceived negative events
- the affect our attitudes can have on our colleagues.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Negotiation skills

Who should attend?

This course is ideal for any staff involved in the recovery of council tax or parking fines.

Suitable for staff new to recovery or experienced staff wishing to improve their skills. This programme can also be adapted to suit any situation which requires staff to negotiate with customers.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- recognise the importance of first impressions
- understand how building rapport helps to put customers at ease and encourages them to be more receptive to agreement
- demonstrate new techniques for gathering information
- understand the customer benefits of each different recovery option
- identify ways in which the individual can help increase recovery rates.

Attendees will learn

- the value of building a relationship with the customer
- how to vary their approach and style to suit the five different types of debtors
- the importance of making the customer aware of the benefits to the solutions we offer
- three techniques to help make customers less defensive and more receptive to suggestions
- the advantages of using an advisory approach when explaining the consequences of continued non-payment
- the benefits to making a customer feel involved in the decision making process.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Every second counts (see page 23)

Every complaint counts (see page 20)

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Conflict management

Who should attend?

This workshop is designed for any staff that need to maintain a positive approach to managing, resolving and, where appropriate, preventing conflict.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- recognise the difference between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour
- manage conflict through effective communication i.e. tone and words
- use techniques shown throughout the workshop to control and neutralise non-violent aggression.

Attendees will learn

- how to recognise the signs that show a customer is preparing for conflict
- an understanding of the policies, procedures and laws that are there to help us including;
 - the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - the Employment Rights Act 1996
 - the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- the advantages and disadvantages to passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour in a conflict situation
- how to identify the six phases of a conflict
- how to recognise trigger points and warning signs that demonstrate a customers emotions are escalating
- the communication skills effective at helping to avoid or reduce conflict
- how the non-verbal signals used during communication can affect the outcome of a conflict situation
- how to assess a conflict situation from a personal safety perspective
- the ten proven techniques to diffuse aggressive situations.

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Employee, team leader and management development

Data protection workshop

Who should attend?

This workshop is designed to improve Data Protection Act (DPA) awareness of staff who handle, collate and process sensitive and personal information on individuals.

Suitable for staff with limited DPA knowledge or more experienced staff who would benefit from a refresher.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will have gained:

- an understanding of the Data Protection Act 1988
- knowledge of the individual and corporate responsibilities for ensuring the terms of the Act are adhered to.

Attendees will learn

- who needs to comply with the Data Protection Act
- information that is covered by the Act
- the eight principles of the Act
- who has responsibility for data protection
- penalties for breaches to the Act.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Customer services

Queries relating to HB/CTB will always represent a significant proportion of the total number of a council's customer contacts. Customer services is the most important part of the process, both in terms of providing high levels of customer care and also in ensuring the integrity of the process from the very outset. We have therefore worked with our local authority clients to deliver a series of courses that focus on meeting the needs of customers, which include:

- the development of customer service skills, specifically for revenues and benefits staff
- technical and systems training for customer services staff
- training in letter writing, listening and communication skills
- fraud awareness training in a customer services environment.

Local authorities adopt a range of solutions in delivering high quality customer services and they need to be tailored to meet the divergent needs of residents and stakeholders. Our tailored courses for customer services staff have allowed our local authority clients to:

- provide real customer focus by resolving queries at the earliest opportunity
- align their overall objectives with customer services in order to provide a seamless service
- invest in staff by ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge they need
- ensure that skills and processes are focused on the customer as this allows local authorities to improve processing times, maximise collection and meet customer expectations.

Customer care

Our customer care training programmes are aimed at helping staff discover the skills needed to provide high levels of service focused on the specific needs of the local government customer. The ultimate goal of these programmes is to bring out the full potential of employees and better focus their efforts.

"Capita helped us with our project to provide comprehensive benefits advice to our customers. The training it provided was excellent and tailored to our needs."

Andrew Wilson, Training Manager, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

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Every call counts

Who should attend?

This course is designed to improve the overall customer service skills of staff who deal with customers on the telephone.

Suitable for staff new to customer services or experienced staff wishing to improve their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- demonstrate the key skills needed to provide professional customer service
- capably use positive language to alter the reactions of customers
- recognise the value of the personal touch
- understand how our behaviour affects the behaviour of the customer
- realise the importance of first impressions
- understand the value of enthusiasm
- recognise how their tone of voice can affect the success of customer interaction.

Attendees will learn

- the four key areas to good customer service over the telephone
- the seven needs of the customer
- the value of treating the customer as an individual
- the benefits of phrasing things in a positive way
- the importance of using the right tone of voice with customers.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Diffuse the anger: telephone (see page 21)

Negotiation skills (see page 14)

Every second counts (see page 23)

Every complaint counts (see page 20)

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Every customer counts

Who should attend?

This course is designed to improve the overall customer service skills of staff who deal with customers face-to-face. Suitable for staff new to customer services or experienced staff wishing to improve their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- demonstrate the key skills needed to provide professional customer service
- capably use positive language to alter the reactions of customers
- recognise the value of the personal touch
- understand how their behaviour affects the behaviour of the customer
- realise the importance of first impressions
- understand the value of enthusiasm
- recognise how their body language can affect the success of the customer interaction.

Attendees will learn

- the three key areas to good customer service in the face-to-face environment
- the seven needs of the customer
- the value of treating the customer as an individual
- the benefits of phrasing things in a positive way
- the importance of non-verbal communication.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Diffuse the anger: customer-facing (see page 22)

Negotiation skills (see page 14)

Every second counts (see page 23)

Every complaint counts (see page 20).

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Every complaint counts

Who should attend?

This course is designed to enhance the skills of anyone responsible for responding to written complaints.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- understand the reasons customers complain
- identify why public sector complaints are unique
- compose good quality responses to written complaints
- understand how their responses to complaints may affect a customer
- identify best practice for complaint responses.

Attendees will learn

- why people complain
- what makes public sector complaints different
- how their response can affect the customer
- what a poor response looks like
- what a good response looks like
- how to use positive language to deliver bad news.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Diffuse the anger (telephone)

Who should attend?

This course is ideal for staff whose job role involves dealing with difficult customers over the phone.

Suitable for staff new to customer services or experienced staff wishing to improve their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- understand why angry customers sometimes act unreasonably
- identify the triggers that further enrage angry customers
- demonstrate the skills required to calm difficult customers
- deal with irate customers calmly and efficiently.

Attendees will learn

- the benefits to allowing customers to let off steam
- how their own personal behaviour can influence the behaviour of the customer
- the importance of acknowledging the customer's feelings
- tips to help maintain composure when under pressure
- how their word choice can alter outcomes.

Course length

Half a day.

Self study requirements

After the workshop all delegates will be required to complete an action plan to aid their continued development back in the workplace.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Negotiation skills (see page 14)

Every second counts (see page 23)

Every complaint counts (see page 20)

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Diffuse the anger (customer-facing)

Who should attend?

This course is designed to enhance the skills of staff dealing with difficult customers in a face-to-face environment.

Suitable for staff new to customer services or experienced staff wishing to improve their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- understand why angry customers sometimes act unreasonably
- identify the triggers that further enrage angry customers
- demonstrate the skills required to calm difficult customers
- deal with irate customers calmly and efficiently
- understand the importance of non-verbal communication and how it can be used to diffuse anger.

Attendees will learn

- the benefits to allowing customers to let off steam
- how their own personal behaviour can influence the behaviour of the customer
- the importance of acknowledging the customer's feelings
- how their word choice can alter outcomes
- tips to help maintain composure when under pressure
- how body language affects the interaction.

Course length

Half a day.

Self study requirements

After the workshop all delegates will be required to complete an action plan to aid their continued development back in the workplace.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Negotiation skills (see page 14)

Every second counts (see page 23)

Every complaint counts (see page 20)

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Every second counts

Who should attend?

This programme is ideal for contact centre staff keen to improve their call handling time.

Suitable for staff new to the contact centre environment or experienced staff looking for new techniques to help enhance their call handling skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- lead a conversation to a desired outcome whilst ensuring there is a balance of giving and receiving information
- recognise when and how misunderstandings may arise and how to take steps to clarify these in a positive manner
- manage difficult conversations while maintaining control and composure
- adapt communication styles to match the needs of different types of customers
- use some simple and effective techniques for diffusing anxiety so that people in a distressed state are in a better frame of mind to listen, rationalise and agree to a solution.

Attendees will learn

- the 10 'secrets' to control a call
- the call control skills that don't compromise quality
- the LAMA conversation cycle (Listen, Acknowledge, Make a statement, Ask a question)
- the potential barriers to controlling a call and how to overcome them
- how to listen reflectively
- how to gain customer agreement using the 'agreement frame'
- to practice-learn skills using 'phone coach' equipment.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

Recommended follow up courses

Every complaint counts (see page 20)

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Customer services

Outbound calling

Who should attend?

This course is designed to improve the skills of staff responsible for making outbound calls.

Suitable for staff new to outbound calling or experienced staff wishing to improve their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- understand how best to open an outbound call
- identify potential barriers to outbound calls and how to overcome them
- recognise how rapport can make the outbound call more successful
- demonstrate the skills needed to handle objections and conflict
- understand the customer benefits of the solutions offered.

Attendees will learn

- how to prepare for an outbound call
- the value of the personal touch
- how to overcome potential barriers to an outbound call
- rapport and the pitfalls to avoid
- how to use positive phrasing
- how to handle objections.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Customer services

Effective customer email communication

Who should attend?

This course is designed to improve the skills of staff responsible for responding to customer emails.

Suitable for staff new to customer email correspondence or experienced staff wishing to enhance their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- capably use Outlook shortcuts
- understand the importance of writing emails in a clear, concise style
- recognise how to structure emails effectively
- understand the importance of communicating messages in a convincing manner
- assess the tone of their email to minimise misinterpretation.

Attendees will learn

- how to use Outlook shortcuts
- the benefits to writing emails clearly and concisely
- how to effectively structure email responses
- the importance of attaining the right 'tone' in email communication.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Effective letter writing

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB and council tax frontline staff
- Council tax staff.

Learning objectives

- to be able to write information-request letters to which the customer will respond quickly and appropriately
- to be able to write letters and edit decision notices so that they provide clear and concise explanations
- to share good practice.

Attendees will learn

- to construct non-standard letters which are:
 - clear
 - concise
 - courteous
 - convincing
 - complete
- the importance of punctuation
- plain English alternatives to technical jargon
- the importance of editing standard templates
- to review letters, identifying bad practice through practical exercises.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Customer services

Customer service skills in the housing and council tax benefit environment

Who should attend?

HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To deal effectively with HB/CTB customers.

Attendees will learn

- the basic principles of good customer care
- how to listen effectively
- how to use effective questioning techniques to obtain the required outcome
- how to make the most of customer contact in the benefits environment
- the principles and application of the data protection law
- techniques for dealing with difficult customers.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Customer services

Housing and council tax benefits for HB/CTB frontline staff

Who should attend?

Newly-appointed HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To obtain a broad understanding of all aspects of the HB/CTB schemes, the calculation of entitlement and the administration of claims.

Attendees will learn

- to understand the criteria applied to HB/CTB claims to establish occupation and liability
- to understand the requirements of making an effective claim and verifying evidence
- to understand what is meant by the claimant's household and non-dependants
- to recognise the factors which affect applicable amounts and premiums
- to understand how the claimant's income and capital is calculated
- to gain an awareness of the assessment of HB/CTB using the means test
- to recognise the various dates that affect awards of HB/CTB
- to gain an understanding of how overpayments are calculated and recovered
- to understand the decision-making and appeals process.

Course length

Three days (or five days with systems).

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Local Housing Allowance for HB/CTB frontline staff

Who should attend?

HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to establish when the LHA applies, have a good understanding of how it is calculated and be fully conversant with issues regarding payment.

Attendees will learn

- which cases are assessed using the LHA
- which cases are exempt from the LHA scheme
- what is meant by the term 'broad rental market area'
- how the maximum rent is calculated
- how to use the size criteria to establish the correct bedroom requirement
- to know what month's LHA rate is used
- to understand which changes affect the LHA rate and when the rate is reviewed
- to decide when payments must, or may be, made to the landlord or another third party in accordance with the regulations and the local safeguard policy
- to deal with queries regarding payment and to know what information and evidence is required for decisions regarding payment
- to know what elements of the LHA are open to appeal and when a DHP can be applied for.

Course length

One day (with systems). For less experienced staff, this course can be covered over two days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Fraud awareness and authenticating original documents

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB frontline staff
- HB/CTB post-opening staff.

Learning objectives

- To obtain a broad understanding of all aspects of the HB/CTB schemes, the calculation of entitlement and the administration of claims
- to know how to authenticate supporting documentation, to understand the types of fraud that can occur and to know the appropriate action to take.

Attendees will learn

- the risks of fraudulent activity to the social security system
- the definition of 'fraud'
- the importance of the claims and verification process, and the checks that can be carried out
- how to authenticate original documentation and what action to take when original documents are not available.
- to recognise the various types of fraud that can occur
- what action the local authority can take when fraud is detected.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Training and coaching skills

Line managers play a key role in developing staff and therefore coaching is intrinsic to increasing the confidence and performance of their staff. Our trainers work closely alongside operational service managers at all our local government sites dealing with the ongoing delivery of our fully-managed services.

Specialised courses are available to help managers and supervisors develop staff and improve performance by:

- identifying management styles for coaching, to get the right results
- improving performance through clear communication
- delivering quality feedback to staff and setting measurable objectives
- taking corrective action to deal with difficult situations

We also provide courses for established Benefits Trainers in order to maximise the effectiveness of their training delivery.

“The session was specific to the needs of my team and fully achieved the objectives that I had set. The delivery of the workshop was such that even quieter members of the team contributed on a number of occasions. The open style of the session allowed us to consider the issues at hand and reflect on our own behaviour. All team members were very positive after leaving the session and I hope to build on this to increase our relationship with customers and enhance performance.”

Patrick Morrison, Revenues and Benefits Team Leader, Walsall Council

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Coaching for performance

Who should attend?

This course is ideal for any Supervisor, Team Leader, Manager or Director responsible for developing and managing staff performance.

Suitable for both the new Manager looking to learn new skills and also the more experienced Manager looking to enhance their skills.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- understand the importance of coaching
- identify the difference between directive and non-directive coaching
- understand and apply the GROW coaching model
- understand the basics of personality types and their impact on team dynamics
- practise their coaching skills back in the workplace
- give feedback confidently to enable the right outcome.

Attendees will learn

- the purpose of coaching
- the benefits of coaching
- the boundaries of coaching
- the coaching continuum (the different styles of coaching)
- the GROW (**G**oal, **R**eality, **O**ptions, **W**ill) model
- communication techniques to improve their coaching skills
- how to give developmental feedback
- the four Honey and Mumford learning styles
- skills practice (role play with feedback).

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Coaching for new skills and knowledge

Who should attend?

This programme is designed to enhance the skills of any service or product expert responsible for training, coaching and mentoring any staff that are new, less experienced or underperforming.

Learning objectives

By the end of the workshop delegates will be able to:

- describe their role as a coach
- describe the difference between coaching and mentoring
- explain each of the four learning styles
- create activities which encourage learning and discovery
- identify four coaching styles and when to use them
- use group coaching techniques
- structure a briefing note or session
- use questioning and listening skills effectively
- give balanced objective and specific feedback.

Attendees will learn

- how to use coaching to get the best out of people
- how to use Honey and Mumford's learning styles to make coaching effective
- how to make the coaching experience engaging by following the principles of 'brain-friendly learning'
- how to conduct an effective group coaching session
- the communications skills needed to be an effective coach
- why, when and how to give feedback.

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Nicki Brown on 07760 991 817 or nicki.brown@capita.co.uk

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Training and coaching skills

Training the HB/CTB trainer

Who should attend?

HB/CTB Supervisors, Team Leaders and Managers who train as part of their remit.

Learning objectives

To ensure that trainers understand how to empower individuals to perform to capacity in a housing and council tax benefit environment.

Attendees will learn

- to understand what training is and how to train successfully
- to understand communication
- to identify learning motivations and training objectives
- to identify training techniques and methodology
- to understand why conflict occurs and how to deal with it
- how to set targets and monitor performance
- best practice for course materials and handouts
- how to evaluate training.

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Benefits new starter and overview courses

New starter and overview courses

Our modular approach to the delivery of training programmes for benefits staff was developed as part of the DWP's initiative to develop model new entrant training programmes and materials. This all-inclusive training for new entrants provides:

- comprehensive training programmes covering theory, systems and consolidation
- the use of practical examples and group exercises
- tailored courseware for assessment staff, customer services staff and specialist roles.

Emphasis is placed on the decision-making skills that equip staff to deal confidently with customer claims and queries. Training on customer care and equal opportunities is an integral part of each programme. This applies to all staff, as everyone is encouraged to understand their own role and how it impacts on the customer.

In addition to the full modular new entrant training programme, we are also able to offer courses for new entrants which are specifically tailored to provide:

- condensed overviews covering both HB/CTB and other welfare benefits
- targeted training on fraud awareness
- ongoing updates on changes to the HB/CTB schemes
- introductory training for non-benefits staff i.e.: external advice agency staff, housing association staff, housing staff and customer services staff, including Call Centre Agents.

"I have found all of the APT trainers that I have dealt with, without exception, to be at the top of their field. They are up to date with current legislation, provide excellent handouts and have always been willing to work with me to ensure that the training delivered is relevant to our specific needs. The training delivery was professional, clear and very relevant to the type of claimant we have in Havering, and in my view was the best we have ever had."

Sharon Kahan, Policy and Systems Training Officer,
London Borough of Havering

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Benefits new starter courses

New starter assessment training programme

Who should attend?

Newly-appointed HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to assess all claim types, with the exception of students and self-employed claims.

Attendees will learn

- **Weeks one and two:** these are foundation weeks covering an introduction to the different benefit schemes, liability, occupation, the 'pass-ported' calculation, other state benefits/credits, basic council tax legislation, eligible payments and the claim process
- **Week three:** standard assessments and simple changes
- **Week six:** other changes, overpayments, extended payments and fraud awareness
- **Week nine:** LHA, The Rent Service and Regulation 9
- **Week 12:** new claims.

Course length

Typically six weeks, over a 13 week period, interspersed with seven weeks of consolidation. This course can be tailored to reflect the council's caseload and workload by, for example, starting with new claims or covering LHAs earlier in the programme.

Both theory and systems training are an integral part of this course and we are able to offer on-site consolidation supervision, using the authority's own real-time work and systems. The course includes regular testing and evaluation and can be extended by one week to include revision, a written test and a final report evaluating each trainee's progress and competency.

HBLearning is Capita LGS' housing benefit e-learning tool and it is recommended that trainees have access to this throughout the course.

In view of the length of time it takes to train new staff to be able to process new claims this programme is ideal when considered as an integral part of the recruitment and selection process, to ensure the availability of trainers in accordance with the council's recruitment timetable.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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New starter pre-assessment training programme

Who should attend?

- newly-appointed HB/CTB pre-assessment staff
- frontline staff dealing with HB/CTB such as reception, one stop shop and fast track staff.

Learning objectives

- to be able to pre-assess all claim types, with the exception of students and self-employed claims
- to be able to advise customers when further information is required to enable their claim to be assessed.

Attendees will learn

- **Weeks one and two:** pre-assessing 'pass-ported' new claims and simple changes
- **Weeks five and six:** pre-assessing standard claims
- **Week nine:** pre-assessing other changes and fraud awareness
- **Week 12:** pre-assessing claims which include private rents and Regulation 9.

Course length

Typically six weeks, over a 13 week period, interspersed with seven weeks of consolidation.

Both theory and systems training are an integral part of this course and we are able to offer on-site consolidation supervision, using the authority's own real-time work and systems.

In view of the length of time it takes to train new staff to be able to pre-assess new claims and changes this programme is ideal when considered as an integral part of the recruitment and selection process, to ensure the availability of trainers in accordance with the council's recruitment timetable.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Benefits new starter courses

Foundation course for new HB/CTB Assessors

Who should attend?

Newly-appointed HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To obtain a detailed understanding of the key areas of the HB/CTB schemes, the calculation of entitlement and the administration of claims.

Attendees will learn

- to understand the criteria applied to HB/CTB claims to establish occupation and liability
- to understand who is included in the 'claimant's household', for HB/CTB purposes, and how non-dependants affect entitlement
- to recognise the factors that affect applicable amounts and premiums
- to calculate the claimant's income including applying the correct earned and unearned disregards
- to calculate the claimant's tariff income from capital
- to understand how to establish the eligible rent for all claim types
- to accurately apply the effective dates for claims and changes
- to identify which changes will lead to overpayments and the rules relating to their calculation and recovery
- to recognise the various dates that affect awards of HB/CTB
- to understand the decision-making and appeals process.

Course length

Two weeks.

This is an intensive foundation course, designed to equip trainees with core benefit knowledge and skills that can be developed when they are back in the workplace. It includes both theory and systems training.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Benefits new starter courses

Introduction course for HB/CTB Assessors

Who should attend?

Newly-appointed HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To obtain a broad understanding of all aspects of the HB/CTB schemes, the calculation of entitlement and the administration of claims.

Attendees will learn

- to understand the criteria applied to HB/CTB claims to establish occupation and liability
- to understand who is included in the 'claimant's household', for HB/CTB purposes
- to recognise the factors that affect applicable amounts and premiums
- to understand how the claimant's income and capital are calculated
- to gain an awareness of the assessment of HB/CTB using the means test
- to recognise the various dates that affect awards of HB/CTB
- to understand the decision-making and appeals process.

Course length

Three days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Benefits new starter courses

An overview of housing and council tax benefit

Who should attend?

Newly-appointed HB/CTB staff (Assessment, Pre-assessment and Customer Service Advisors).

Learning objectives

To obtain a broad understanding of all aspects of the HB/CTB schemes, the calculation of entitlement and the administration of claims.

Attendees will learn

- to understand the criteria applied to HB/CTB claims for establishing occupation and liability
- to understand who is included in the 'claimant's household' for HB/CTB purposes
- to recognise the factors that affect applicable amounts and premiums
- to understand how the claimant's income and capital are calculated
- to develop an appreciation of the assessment of HB/CTB entitlement using the means test
- to recognise the various dates that affect awards of HB/CTB.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Benefits overview courses

Fraud awareness and authenticating original documents

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To understand the importance of preventing and detecting fraud in the administration and payment of housing and council tax benefit.

Attendees will learn

- the risks of fraudulent activity to the social security system
- the definition of fraud
- the importance of the claims and verification process and the checks that can be carried out
- to recognise the various types of fraud that can occur
- what action the LA can take when fraud is detected.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Benefits overview courses

Housing and council tax benefit for non-benefit staff

Who should attend?

- external advice agency staff
- housing association staff
- housing staff
- customer service staff, including Call Centre Agents.

Learning objectives

To obtain a broad understanding of all aspects of the HB/CTB schemes, the calculation of entitlement and the administration of claims.

Attendees will learn

- to understand the criteria applied to HB/CTB claims to establish occupation and liability
- an awareness of the assessment of HB/CTB using the means test
- to understand the claims process, in particular the rules relating to effective dates and backdating
- to understand the evidence requirements for different claim types
- to understand how the appeals process works.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Benefits overview courses

Understanding the welfare benefits system

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff
- external advice agency staff
- housing association staff
- housing staff
- customer service staff, including Contact Centre Agents.

Learning objectives

To have a broad understanding of the UK benefits system, its structure and its content.

Attendees will learn

- to recognise the difference between means-tested and non-means tested benefits
- to identify the basic eligibility rules for key benefits (including Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Tax Credits, Pension Credits, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and the Social Fund)
- how key benefits are claimed
- a basic understanding of how key benefits are calculated
- when key benefits may change, in order that HB/CTB is superseded at the earliest opportunity
- how key benefits affect HB/CTB entitlement.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Assessing housing benefit and council tax benefit claims

The retention of skilled staff is integral to the delivery of a quality benefits service. Given the expertise required to maintain the necessary standards of accuracy in this complex area of local government administration, we have developed an approach to technical and refresher training that:

- provides training on all aspects of HB/CTB theory and systems
- supports the development of existing staff in a variety of operational roles
- makes use of a wide variety of creative learning opportunities, rather than relying on traditional off-the-shelf courses
- underpins quality, accuracy and responsiveness
- delivers hands-on training underpinned by the legislative context of the HB/CTB schemes.

We place considerable emphasis on on-the-job coaching as well as formal classroom training, as this allows trainees to consolidate their knowledge at a speed that suits them.

"I've spoken to attendees and they all said how good the trainers made what is really quite a dry subject. They liked Capita's training style and the fact that it was 'human' rather than delivering the training in the wooden style some trainers adopt."

Mark Griffiths, Benefits Manager, Amber Valley Borough Council

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Assessing housing benefit and council tax benefit claims
Claims, dates and verification

Claims for HB/CTB and the verification process

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB customer services staff, including Call Centre Agents/Telephone Advisors
- other council/external staff involved in giving advice to HB/CTB claimants.

Learning objectives

- to have a broad understanding of the claims process
- to appreciate the importance of accurate, verified information in making the correct assessment decision.

Attendees will learn

- how a claim should be made, where and by whom
- how to apply the requirements of Section 19
- how to apply the regulations requiring claimants to provide supporting evidence and information
- what proof is required and how this is obtained
- what happens if all the necessary evidence and information is not supplied

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Regulation 7 – occupation of the dwelling

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

- to understand the underlying criterion of 'occupation' for HB/CTB entitlement
- to be able to apply the particular rules relating to temporary absence, benefit on two homes and benefit prior to moving in.

Attendees will learn

- to identify the claimant's 'normal home' in the majority of cases and understand what further information may be required if it isn't clear
- the special rules that apply to the identification of the 'normal home' for certain students and cases where the claimant's home is undergoing 'essential repairs'
- to identify the circumstances where HB on two homes is payable
- to identify the circumstances where HB is payable prior to moving in and how this relates to HB on two homes
- to understand the rules relating to periods of temporary absence, the different periods that HB/CTB can be paid in these circumstances and the categories of claimant these rules apply to.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Effective dates for new claims and changes in circumstances

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

- to be able to establish the claim date and start date for new claims
- to know when to amend entitlement and when changes are effective from.

Attendees will learn

- to apply the six 'claim date' options
- to apply the four 'start date' options
- to understand the life of a claim
- to understand the general rule relating to the effective dates for changes of circumstance and the exceptions to the general rule
- a basic knowledge of which changes may create overpayments (not including the assessment of these claims)
- which changes end the benefit award and which are treated as a change of circumstances.

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Extended payments

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To identify claims where an extended payment (EP) is appropriate, establish entitlement and award it for the correct period.

Attendees will learn

- To understand the intentions behind and purpose of the EP scheme
- The details of the EP qualifying conditions and the ability to establish if they have been met
- To calculate the amount of EP and know who is responsible for administering it if the claimant has changed address
- To understand when a run-on is applicable for elderly claimants, what period it should cover and the rate of HB/CTB payable.

Course length

Half a day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Assessing standard claims

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To apply the correct applicable amount, income and capital to HB/CTB claims and manually calculate them.

Attendees will learn

- how the applicable amount affects the benefit calculation
- to accurately establish the weekly net earnings figure and the appropriate earnings disregards
- the different types of income and the disregards that apply to them
- to accurately calculate tariff income from the claimant's capital
- to become familiar with the capital thresholds and the ways in which they affect entitlement to HB/CTB, IS/JSA(IB), ESA(IR) and pension credits
- to understand how to value all types of capital including property and land, whether solely or jointly held
- to establish when capital may be disregarded for benefit purposes
- to be aware of the notional capital and diminishing notional capital rules and be able to identify potential cases for referral to a senior benefits practitioner/manager.

Course length

Three days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Household and non-dependants

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to establish who forms part of the 'benefit family', who counts as a non-dependant and how this affects HB/CTB entitlement, and how this differs for LHA calculation.

Attendees will learn

- who forms part of the 'claimant's household' for HB/CTB purposes
- how other residents are classified and affect entitlement, e.g. landlords, joint tenants, non-dependants
- who counts as a non-dependant
- to accurately establish the level of non-dependant deduction that applies, including where the non-dependant has a partner
- to know how to apply the non-dependant deduction when there is more than one liable person
- when a deduction isn't taken based on either the claimant's/partner's circumstances or the non-dependant's circumstances
- when the easement rule applies and what effective dates to use
- verification of the non-dependant's income.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Applicable amounts

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to establish which personal allowances and premiums should be used in the benefit calculation.

Attendees will learn

- how the applicable amount affects the benefit calculation
- to accurately establish the personal allowances that the claimant and the benefit family are entitled to
- to appreciate the qualifying conditions of all of the premiums and to know which can be awarded regardless of the claimant/partner's age and which are age-dependent
- to accurately establish which family premium to award and the effective date to use
- to accurately establish the claimant's entitlement to the full range of disability premiums
- to accurately establish the personal allowances, components and premiums to be used when the claimant and/or their partner receives employment and support allowance (ESA)
- to accurately establish entitlement to the carer premium including when underlying entitlement applies to this premium
- to know what evidence may be required to establish entitlement to the various premiums.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

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Capital

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To establish the value of all types of capital and be able to calculate the correct weekly tariff income.

Attendees will learn

- to become familiar with the capital thresholds and the ways in which they affect entitlement to HB/CTB, IS/JSA(IB), ESA(IR) and pension credits
- to understand how to value all types of capital, including property and land, whether solely or jointly held
- to identify when it is appropriate to disregard 10% from the gross capital value and how to deal with encumbrances
- to establish which types of capital are disregarded for benefit purposes and how long they may be disregarded for
- to be aware of the notional capital and diminishing notional capital rules and be able to identify potential cases for referral to a senior benefits practitioner/manager.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

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Income

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to establish the net weekly amount for various types of earned and unearned income, apply the appropriate disregard and thereby reach the income figure used to calculate benefit entitlement.

Attendees will learn

- to understand whose income affects the benefit assessment
- to convert all income frequencies to a weekly figure
- to accurately establish the weekly net earnings figure and the appropriate earnings disregard(s)
- to know which types of childcare costs may be disregarded and how to establish if they fall into this category
- to understand when the claimant's circumstances allow child care costs to be disregarded
- to be familiar with the different types of unearned income and the disregards that apply to them
- to understand which fully-disregarded unearned income types must be verified because they affect HB\CTB entitlement
- to accurately calculate tariff income from the claimant's capital
- how to establish net weekly tax credit income
- how to establish net weekly income for pension credit applicants.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Pension credits

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to provide general information about claiming pension credit to customers and to explain how it impacts on a pensioner's housing benefit and council tax benefit claim(s).

Attendees will learn

- about the two types of pension credit and how they can be claimed
- what supporting evidence and changes must be reported to the LA and which must be reported to the pension service
- about the income and capital rules for pensioners
- when and how non-dependants affect certain pensioner claims and how they are affected if the non-dependant receives pension credit
- to be familiar with changes to the effective date rules for pensioner claims.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Self-employed claimants

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to calculate HB/CTB where the claimant is classified as self-employed.

Attendees will learn

- to identify those earners whose earned income comes from self-employment
- to understand what period the relevant trading period should cover
- to calculate the total income
- to identify what expenses are allowed and what expenses are not allowed
- to calculate notional tax and NI for self-employed earners and to understand how pension contributions are dealt with
- to understand the specific rules used to assess self-employed child minders.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Assessing private tenant cases

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

- to understand the effect of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and The Rent Service on establishing the eligible rent
- to be able to establish the correct LHA rate
- to be able to refer and implement a Rent Service determination correctly
- to be able to calculate the eligible rent in private sector cases.

Attendees will learn

- which cases are assessed using the LHA and which are subject to referral to The Rent Service
- how to calculate the maximum LHA including when the £15 excess applies
- how to use the size criteria to establish the correct bedroom requirement
- to know what month's LHA rate to use and how to work out the anniversary date
- to understand the function of The Rent Service and when a case should be re-referred
- to make an anniversary and substitute re-referral, including knowing when to do so
- to understand The Rent Service's determination and how to decide on the maximum rent to be used in the claim
- to understand the differences between the old and new schemes and be able to decide under which scheme a claim should be dealt with
- to understand when to apply the 13 week/12 month protection from restriction and how the maximum rent is calculated in these circumstances
- to understand which changes affect the LHA rate, or require a new referral to The Rent Service, and the effective dates of the new rates
- the rules regarding payment of rent allowance and how to establish to whom payments must be made
- to understand the process of appealing against The Rent Service's determination.

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Council tax and eligible costs for council tax benefit

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

- to be able to establish the correct council tax liability
- to know what action to take if the liability is inaccurate
- to be able to calculate council tax benefit entitlement.

Attendees will learn

- to understand what council tax is and how it is charged
- whether a claimant should be liable to pay council tax
- the rules for single person discount and disregarded persons
- to manually calculate second adult rebate and when to apply the 'better buy' rules
- to manually calculate weekly council tax liability and therefore the main council tax benefit for IS/JSA (IB)/ESA(IR)/GC cases.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Eligible rent costs for housing benefit

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to calculate the eligible rent for housing benefit claims that are not subject to the Local Housing Allowance or referral to The Rent Service.

Attendees will learn

- to understand the different types of housing benefit that are paid for the various tenancy types
- to identify different types of landlord and tenancy options
- to understand the various types of payment that can be met by HB and calculate weekly amounts
- to identify service charges that are included in the rent, understand which are not eligible for HB and calculate the deduction that should apply.

Course length

One day.

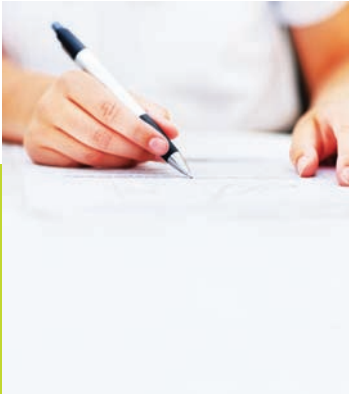
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Regulation 9 – liability

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to establish when a claimant should be excluded from housing benefit by being treated as 'not liable' to pay rent.

Attendees will learn

- when to apply the provisions of Regulation 9 (1)
- to identify the groups of claimant to which the regulation applies
- to identify the instances when the provision should not be applied
- to identify the relevant considerations where it appears that a tenancy has been contrived to take advantage of the housing benefit scheme.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Local Housing Allowance

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

To be able to establish when the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) applies, accurately calculate the maximum rent and work out when this is effective from, and to decide who to pay.

Attendees will learn

- which cases are assessed using the LHA
- which cases are exempt from the LHA scheme
- what is meant by the term 'broad rental market area'
- how to calculate the maximum LHA, when the £15 excess applies and the effect of the 13 week/12 month protection
- how to use the size criteria to establish the correct bedroom requirement
- to know what month's LHA rate to use and how to work out the anniversary date
- to understand which changes affect the LHA rate and the effective date of the new rate
- to decide when payments must, or may be, made to the landlord or other third party in accordance with the regulations and the local safeguard policy
- to know what elements of the LHA are open to appeal
- how DHPs may be used where the LHA forms the basis of the benefit assessment and there is a shortfall between the LHA and the rent charged.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

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Overpayments and underlying entitlement

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB overpayments staff.

Learning objectives

To understand how overpayments occur and how to calculate, classify and recover overpayments of HB/CTB.

Attendees will learn

- to calculate the correct amount of an overpayment
- to apply the rules relating to underlying entitlement when calculating overpayments
- to classify overpayments correctly and to understand the subsidy and recovery implications of the various classifications
- to understand which overpayments are not recoverable
- the various methods of recovery and from whom recovery should be sought
- the basic legal requirements of the decision notice and what constitutes a comprehensive notice.

Course length

Two days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Understanding subsidy

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB overpayments staff
- HB/CTB Quality Assurance Officers.

Learning objectives

To understand the impact of the assessment of overpayments on subsidy and the council's funds.

Attendees will learn

- the different subsidy options, when each occurs and how they impact on the council's right to recover the overpayment
- to understand the difference between local authority official error and administrative delay
- the subsidy thresholds of local authority official error
- how to manually classify subsidy on overpayments
- which official error overpayments cannot be recovered.

Course length

Half a day theory only or a full day with systems.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Assessing housing benefit and council tax benefit claims
Other

Understanding overpayment subsidy and recovery

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB Team Leaders and Managers.

Learning objectives

To understand the rules relating to subsidy and how it affects the rent and overpayment elements of HB/CTB claims.

Attendees will learn

- to understand what subsidy is and what the different types are
- to understand the subsidy implications of the various overpayment classifications
- to understand the implications of subsidy upon the different rent schemes
- to ensure that the council's income is maximised through the correct classification of overpayments.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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HB/CTB and persons from abroad

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- experienced advice workers with a working knowledge of HB/CTB.

Learning objectives

To understand how to effectively administer the HB/CTB rules relating to persons from abroad (PFA).

Attendees will learn

- to understand the definition of a PFA
- to understand the current rules and the changes that have been introduced since the concept of PFA was first introduced
- to recognise when and how to apply the tests to decide if a person should be treated as a PFA
- to recognise who is an EEA16, A2 or A8 worker and to understand the various schemes and restrictions that apply to members of each group
- to understand what documentation a PFA will hold and how to obtain further clarification regarding a person's immigration status.

Course length

One day.

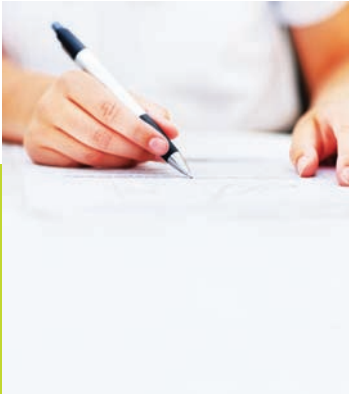
Booking details

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Students

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

- to identify which students are eligible to claim HB/CTB
- to be able to calculate HB/CTB entitlement for claimants who are students.

Attendees will learn

- to identify students and whether they are eligible to claim HB/CTB
- to know which member of a couple should be invited to claim HB/CTB when one is a student
- to calculate the income applied in student cases and apply the specific disregards applicable in these cases
- to understand the various disregards which can be applied to reduce a qualifying student's income and when they should be applied.

Course length

One day.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Measuring and recording performance

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB Team Leaders.

Learning objectives

To understand the various reporting mechanisms for measuring and reporting performance and to know how an individual officer's work impacts upon this.

Attendees will learn

- why it is important to measure how quickly and accurately all aspects of benefit administration are carried out
- who needs this information and how is it used
- the requirements of the single housing benefit extract that affects assessment work
- how the speed and accuracy of processing new claims and change events is measured
- the definition of new claims and change events in relation to measuring performance
- the impact of benefit performance on the national indicators and their significance to the LA
- the impact on performance of the dates used during processing claims and changes.

Course length

One day (with systems).

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Decision making and appeals

Who should attend?

- HB/CTB assessment staff
- HB/CTB appeals staff
- HB/CTB frontline staff.

Learning objectives

How to effectively apply the rules relating to HB/CTB decision making and appeals.

Attendees will learn

- an overview of the appeals process
- to understand the terminology relating to decision making and appeals
- to understand the time limits which apply
- the provisions for suspending and terminating payments
- the difference between revisions, supersessions and appeals
- to understand effective dates relating to revisions, supersessions and appeals
- to understand the Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme
- the importance of comprehensive and clear decision notices
- how The Rent Service determinations and the Local Housing Allowance fit in to the appeals process.

Course length

One day (can be extended to cover the subject in more detail).

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Assessing HB/CTB claims on the Academy benefits system

Who should attend?

Experienced HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To use Academy to assess HB/CTB claims effectively.

Attendees will learn

- how the system functions
- which frames are used to process claims
- what information is required in the fields on each of the frames
- the effect of inputting incorrect information
- how to get the best out of the system to maximise efficiency and output.

Course length

Three days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Assessing housing benefit and council tax benefit claims
Systems

Assessing HB/CTB claims on the Northgate benefits system

Who should attend?

Experienced HB/CTB assessment staff.

Learning objectives

To use Northgate to assess HB/CTB claims effectively.

Attendees will learn

- how the system functions
- which frames are used to assess claims
- what information is required in the fields on each of the screens
- the effect of inputting incorrect information
- how to get the best out of the system to maximise efficiency and output.

Course length

Three days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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The use of the Anite document imaging system in HB/CTB assessment

Who should attend?

HB/CTB assessment and pre-assessment staff.

Learning objectives

How to use the Anite system effectively when processing claims for HB/CTB.

Attendees will learn

- an overview of Anite's functionality
- how documents should be indexed
- how to retrieve and store information
- how to move documents and automatic workflow
- how to view current and historic information
- how to create forms, letters and memos
- how to create and transfer references.

Course length

Two days, plus one day consolidation.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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Revenues

Accurate council tax billing and collection is an important and high profile aspect of local services for authorities across the UK. To assist our local authority clients in maximising collection rates and in providing high levels of customer care, we have devised a range of courses that provide new and existing staff with all of the skills and knowledge they need. The courses are appropriate for council tax processing staff and customer services staff and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of a client. For example, we can include certain processing tasks in the customer services training where a client's service offering includes query resolution at the first point of contact.

The range of courses cover:

- comprehensive and up-to-date training on all aspects of council tax legislation
- the procedures used to put legislation into practice
- systems training for council tax query handling and processing using the Academy and Northgate council tax software
- understanding the needs of council tax customers, focusing on how to resolve their queries quickly and accurately
- consolidation of the areas taught using real work
- the use of practical examples and group exercises
- tailored courseware to reflect specialist roles, the needs of the client and local procedures.

Courses can be tailored to provide an overview of council tax for other interested parties, such as advice agency staff and local councillors.

"We had not used a modular approach to new-entrant training before, one that combined systems and legislation, and we found the ongoing tests and feedback from the trainers very useful. The training was done with a minimum of disruption to our service and the trainer was excellent, fully understanding the needs and requirements of the training brief."

Paul Tolman, Performance and Quality Manager, Reading Borough Council

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Council tax legislation and systems

Who should attend?

Newly appointed council tax staff.

Learning objectives

- to obtain a broad understanding of council tax legislation
- how to use either the Northgate or Academy system for council tax procedures.

Attendees will learn

- how to establish liability for council tax, including identifying the liable person
- how the council tax bill is calculated, what needs to be paid, how and when
- what recovery procedures can be implemented and when
- when it is appropriate to disclose relevant information to affected parties
- how to access information in the Northgate or Academy system
- how to carry out required council tax procedures on the Northgate or Academy system.

Course length

Five days.

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

When booking, please specify whether you need systems training on Northgate or Academy.

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Council tax legislation and systems for Customer Services Advisors

Who should attend?

Suitable for newly appointed Customer Services Advisors and also more experienced Customer Services Advisors looking to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Learning objectives

- to obtain a broad understanding of council tax legislation
- to be able to use either the Northgate or Academy system to answer customer enquiries and effect changes to council tax accounts in accordance with the council's requirements.

Attendees will learn

- how to establish liability for council tax, including identifying the liable person
- how the council tax bill is calculated, what needs to be paid, how and when
- what recovery procedures can be implemented and when
- what information to obtain to enable accounts to be updated
- when it is appropriate to disclose relevant information to affected parties
- how to access information in the Northgate or Academy system
- how to carry out required council tax procedures on the Northgate or Academy system.

Course length

Three or four days (depending on the council's requirement for first-point-of-contact resolution).

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

When booking, please specify whether you need systems training on Northgate or Academy.

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Council tax legislation and systems refresher

Who should attend?

Experienced council tax staff looking to refresh their knowledge and skills.

Learning objectives

- to revisit existing council tax knowledge and skills
- to consolidate expertise by filling in knowledge gaps and thereby building confidence and effectiveness.

Attendees will learn

This course can be tailored depending on the council's requirements. The following topics are suggested:

- establishing liability for council tax, including identifying the liable person
- how the council tax bill is calculated, what needs to be paid, how and when
- reviewing the recovery procedures that can be implemented and when
- rules governing the obtaining and sharing of information
- accessing information in the Northgate or Academy system
- effecting changes to accounts on the Northgate or Academy system.

Course length

Two days (one day legislation and one day systems).

Booking details

Contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

When booking, please specify whether you need systems training on Northgate or Academy.

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e-Learning

Case study

London Borough of Brent and Capita LGS:
delivering an e-learning solution for benefits training

The challenge

The London Borough of Brent realised that in order to achieve successful transformation of its benefits service it required an innovative and flexible training solution. Under pressure to deliver more training, the Council was struggling to balance its training needs against the resources it had available to deliver training. It needed a practical approach to training that was accurate, up-to-date and would utilise resources that were already available.

The solution

Following a comparison exercise with alternative products, the Council selected Capita LGS' e-learning package, HBLearning, to complement its in-house training team. This decision was based on the fact that HBLearning comprises various learning techniques including flowcharts, case studies, worked examples and data tables – providing a different approach to traditional training material by incorporating graphic imagery that stimulates learning by applying visual association of rules and real life situations to the theory.

The result

The introduction of HBLearning has enabled the Council's training team to increase the amount of training it delivers and bring training needs up to date, with noticeable improvements identified in the legislative knowledge and confidence of staff. The flexibility of the e-learning solution facilitates alternative training methods with the material being available 24/7 to everyone involved in the benefits service, including staff based at offsite locations and home workers. The key benefits to the Council since implementing HBLearning include; an increase in the amount and availability of training provided, improved staff knowledge and confidence, improved service delivery and staff retention in the benefits service.

"In Brent we started looking at HBLearning in its infancy and liked what we saw. We have rolled it out to our assessment staff and the feedback that we are getting is excellent. Staff find it user-friendly, informative and fun. We recently compiled a training needs analysis (TNA) of all our staff asking what areas of their work they were lacking confidence in, and we have found HBLearning to be an invaluable tool in developing staff learning skills."

Jenny Franklin, Training and Policy Officer, London Borough of Brent

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HBLearning

HBLearning is a broad-range e-learning tool designed to support the training requirements for both new and experienced benefits staff. It was developed by Capita and SkillWise UK, in conjunction with South Bucks District Council, as a national product initiative through the DWP Performance Standards Fund.

Whether you are a large metropolitan or a geographically dispersed district authority, HBLearning can provide immediate access to training, whatever the location, in as little or as much time as is available.

Find anything, anywhere... fast

Use the structured menu to access content rapidly

Whether you are a new starter or an experienced practitioner, by using the intuitive menu you can access almost 600 elements of learning and reference material within seconds. The material includes:

- a glossary that is available at all times to support the learner
- duration indicators that allow users to plan their learning
- capability allowing administrators to control what the user sees
- content that accurately reflects current legislation
- a function which highlights new content.

Different people learn in different ways

Through the use of varied content models, users can learn in their preferred style

The complex legislation has been carefully broken down and reworked into small logical learning chunks, making them easier for the user to process and absorb. Tools such as workflows and tables have been created to help the user understand how these learning chunks piece together to form processes and concepts. Numerous case studies are provided to allow the user to apply their knowledge in real-life scenarios.

If you are interested in subscribing to HBLearning, contact Capita APT on 020 8315 2248 or apt@capita.co.uk

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