



## The Business Case for membership

The business case has been compiled with input from existing members of The Benefits Directory to explain the benefits of joining to potential new members

LA Directories Ltd launched The Benefits Directory during 2006 to encompass all things Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit; it has since been expanded to include Council Tax Reduction, Universal Credit and Discretionary Housing Payments to help LA staff to deliver their services.

**Direct savings may be secured because**  .....

**...saves time spent on research** by consolidating published law and guidance about Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction all into one web-based knowledge management solution; thus, giving decision makers all the relevant supporting information at their finger-tips and all in one place.

**...helps increase the speed of processing and assessing claims** because **The Benefits Directory** saves time spent on research

**...improves the accuracy of processing** by providing a plain English interpretation of complex law and guidance, and hyperlinks to actual associated law and guidance. No legally unsupported opinions, guesses or interpretations are offered.

**...includes the history of relevant regulations**, Decision Makers at all levels and Appeals Officers are particularly supported because they have instant access to all new and amending Statutory Instruments from 2006 as well as current law

**...is kept up-to-date** through daily on-line updates This means that the requirement for out-of-date manuals or guidance books is eliminated and those costs saved

**...helps validate subsidy income** through detailed explanations of subsidy implications for each decision.

**...provides assurance to auditors** that the local authority is aware of the latest legislation and that decision makers are correctly briefed.

**...is accessible to home workers and mobile working** encouraging reliable decision making by staff in different locations without the need to contact busy supervisors or colleagues.

**...helps management improve individual team members' performance** by providing them with a reliable tool to help encourage their self-development. This means that managers are released to re-engineer procedures that save time and money.

**...enhances the value of training** because such material can link on-line to constantly updated and immediately available information in TBD. This means that training becomes a dynamic process - not a once only event where material soon becomes out of date.

**...can be hyperlinked to local on-line procedure manuals** thus removing the need to constantly update changes in legislation and reducing the procedure manual maintenance requirement.

**...uses standard website functionality and provides a variety of ways to search.** This means that staff can quickly find what they need.

**...uses no password or logons** – full membership provides access via the local authority external IP address thus removing the need for passwords.

**...is accessible by the whole local authority** - full membership provides access to such as Training & Development, Customer Services, Welfare Rights, Housing, Debt Management, Internal Audit, Members etc.

**...IT Support issues are managed by LA Directories Ltd.** This means that TBD members have no internal maintenance or IT support issues or delays.

## TBD Members Exempt Accommodation Discussion Group

Membership provides free attendance for two members of staff from each LA member of TBD. This group meets for half a day online approx four times each year to exchange issues and resolutions to the problems experienced with this complex area of HB administration and decision making. We also invite speakers on occasion to update the group about the latest developments in this area.

In addition to the half-day meetings we also arrange the occasional full day conference, again free to attend for TBD members.



## What is the difference between and a Forum site?

TBD is very often compared with available HB Forum sites by those who believe that it is a similar product, it is however very different; and those differences involve increased research, development and maintenance.

Both TBD and the Forum sites provide a 'library' of circulars, guidance, regulations and caselaw, but that is really where the similarity ends.

### What we do...

We take all the relevant law and guidance and gives it back to members via TBD in plain language following through the HB / CTR / UC / DHP claim and award breaking it down into detailed sections.

We also provide a section to cover HB Subsidy.

All TBD sections of analysis are backed up by legal references, which link to the relevant legislation as updated!

As a company LA Directories Ltd (LADL) –

- stands by its analysis of the relevant legislation and under the terms of the contract undertakes to develop and maintain the Product (TBD) to the best of its ability using reasonable skill and care at all times,
- accepts responsibility should it be shown that we have been negligent. Since 2006 when the company was founded, this has not happened!
- provides a **benefits enquiry service** to members that backs up TBD, some queries can take half a day or more to research where complicated law is involved and responses are always substantiated with relevant legal references.
- provides TBD training to new members, which is offered free of charge annually to existing members to update and refresh users of TBD and to catch new staff.

### What we do not do...

What LADL does not offer is a platform for a forum site for LAs to post their questions. This is because it is not possible to monitor the accuracy of the content of all those different points of views.

If you would like to discuss membership to **The Benefits Directory**, please contact [peter.davis@ladirectories.com](mailto:peter.davis@ladirectories.com)