

**November 2007**

## **HMRC APOLOGISE TO CHILD BENEFIT CUSTOMERS**

Following the announcement that HMRC disks, containing an estimated 25 million Child Benefit recipients' personal and banking information, have gone missing, HMRC have put a letter on their website apologising to all those potentially affected. The following is an extract from the letter from Dave Hartnett, acting Chairman of HMRC:

“I am writing to make a personal apology. A copy of some HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) data about families, including yours, who have received Child Benefit has been lost. The copy of the data is likely to still be on government property. The police are now conducting a search.....

.....this data includes your and your children's names and dates of birth, your address, your National Insurance number and, where relevant, the details of the bank or building society account into which your Child Benefit is or was paid.

If you are paid through a bank or building society, they are aware of this matter. They are acting on this information, and assure us that they have appropriate safeguards in place to protect you.

As is usual in these circumstances, if you are the innocent victim of banking fraud you will not have to pay, but you may want to take some precautionary steps to protect yourself. If you receive bills, invoices or receipts or see entries in your statements for goods or services which you have not ordered you should contact your bank or building society immediately. In addition, do not give out personal or account details if anyone contacts you unexpectedly. Instead take a note of their name and number, and if you are at all suspicious contact your bank or building society. If your password uses any of your personal data, for example your child's name or date of birth, you may also wish to consider changing any passwords you use.

The advice of banks is there is no need for customers to ask for a new account or to contact their bank or building society.....

I would like to offer my personal apologies for any worry or concern this data loss may cause you. And I can assure you that all efforts are being made to ensure that such a loss can never happen again.“

For those individuals who are concerned about the loss of personal data, HMRC have put some frequently asked questions on their website.

**Internet Links:** [Letter of apology](#) and [Frequently asked questions](#)