Halton Parliamentary Constituency

This is the second bulletin of 2013 produced by Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) providing analysis of housing-related data for the Parliamentary Constituencies in the North of England. The report provides analysis of the impacts of welfare reform and the housing market in the constituency.

We have used the following symbols to indicate your performance against the relevant regional or national statistics.

Above average | Reference point | Below average

Welfare Reform

Real Life Reform report is the result of a partnership between Northern Housing Consortium, seven registered providers and York University. Some findings emerging from the first report are that 65% of households have less than £10 per week to live on following rent and essentials such as food and bills. 83% of households are in debt (average £2,418). Households are reporting increased levels of stress and depression.

The Trussell Trust's latest figures show that more people are being referred to foodbanks with Benefit related problems since April's welfare reforms. Between April and June, over 150,000 people received three days' emergency food from a Trussell Trust foodbank - 200% more than the same period in 2012. There are foodbanks in Runcorn and Widnes.

The number of Housing Benefit claimants in the social sector has grown in the constituency since the implementation of the under-occupation penalty. Such claims grew by 0.8% between March and May this year. Furthermore, claims of Local Housing Allowance in the private sector grew by 1.3% in the same period compared with a Cheshire average increase of 0.7%.

While the average Housing Benefit award grew by 0.4%, the average weekly LHA award grew by 0.8% and by multiplying the number of claimants by average weekly award an overall weekly LHA cost increase of 2.1% (£3,705) can be estimated. Figure 1 shows how average costs have changed over this period by dwelling size.

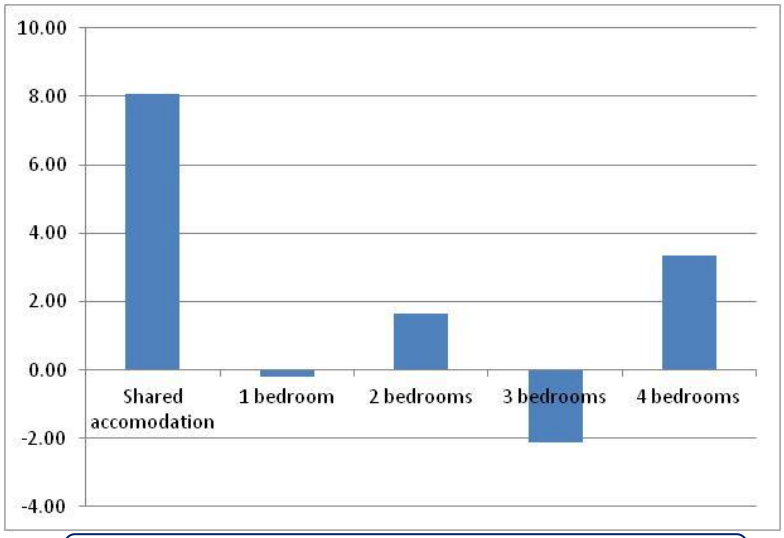


Figure 1: Change in weekly LHA costs

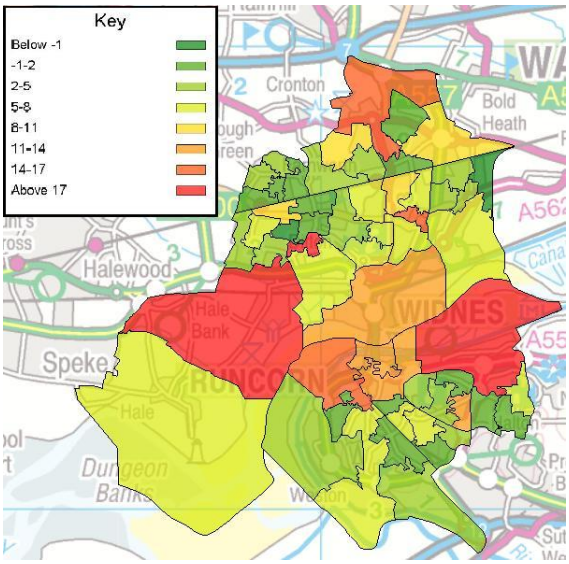
Housing Market

Ministry of Justice data shows that in the Halton LA area, social landlord possession claims in the first two quarters of 2013 stood at 253. This compares to 168 claims in the corresponding timeframe in 2012 – a 50.6% increase. Landlord possessions stood at 30 compared to 25 in the corresponding timeframes. In the private sector (rented and mortgage), while claims fell by 22.1%, possessions fell by 5.4%.

According to ONS figures, the population in the constituency grew by 6.2% from 89407 in 2010 to 94,972 in 2011. The map below shows the population change by lower super output area and that the greatest population increase has taken place in the LSOA covered by the Ditton ward (45.8%) and parts of Broadheath ward have seen greatest decrease (-3.9%) (note: data is not available for some LSOAs in 2011).

Despite this overall increase, CORE data shows that social housing lettings have fallen in the Halton LA area from 1,438 in 2011/12 to 1,437 in 2012/13 – a decrease of 0.1%. This compares to an overall decrease of 5.2% in Cheshire.

In the year ending in March 2013, there were 454 decisions made by the planning authority in Halton LA area. Some 37 of these (8.1%) were regarding developments for housing. This represents 4.6% of all housing-related decisions in Cheshire.



Map 1: Percentage change in population

If you have any queries regarding the content of the APPG briefings, please contact:
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