

St Helens South and Whiston 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. The nearest foodbank to the constituency is in Atherton Street.



The number of Housing Benefit claimants in the social sector has fallen in the constituency since the implementation of the under-occupation penalty. Such claims fell by 0.3% between March and May this year. Meanwhile, claims of Local Housing Allowance in the private sector rose by 1.5% in the same period compared with a Merseyside average increase of 0.5%.



While the average Housing Benefit award grew by 0.6%, the average weekly LHA award fell by 0.3% but by multiplying the number of claimants by average weekly award an overall weekly LHA cost increase of 1.2% (£2,393) can be estimated. Figure 1 shows how average costs have changed over this period by dwelling size.

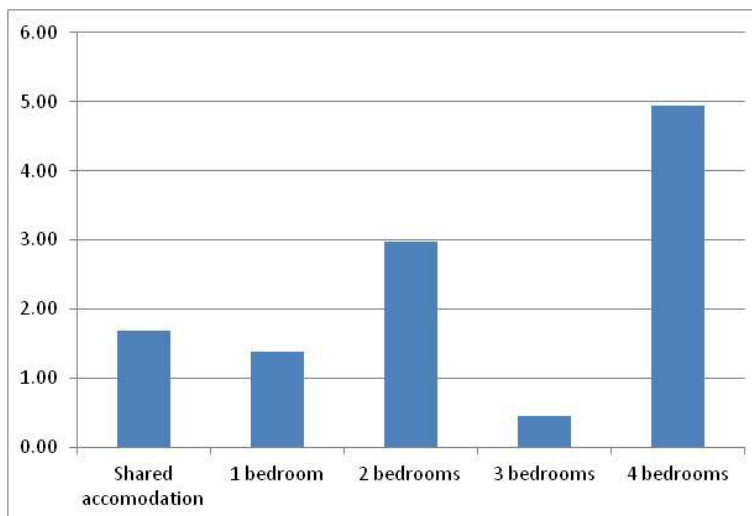


Figure 1: Change in weekly LHA costs

Housing Market



Ministry of Justice data shows that in the St Helens LA area, social landlord possession claims in the first two quarters of 2013 stood at 423, compared to the 150 recorded in the corresponding timeframe in 2012 – an increase of 182%. Landlord possessions stood at 40 compared to 41 in the corresponding timeframe. In the private sector (rented and mortgage), while claims increased by 3.2%, possessions fell by 28.6%.



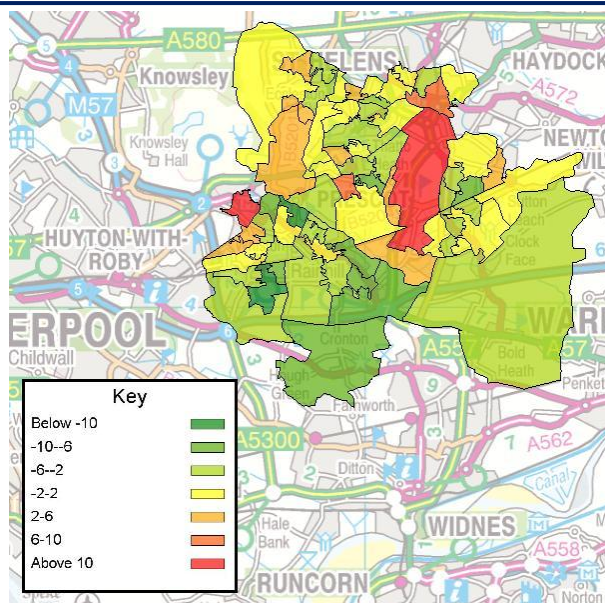
According to ONS figures, the population in the constituency fell by 1.3% from 103,881 in 2010 to 102,518 in 2011. The map below shows the population change by lower super output area and that the greatest population increase has taken place in the LSOA covered by the Thatto Heath ward (20.6%) and parts of Whiston South ward have seen greatest decrease (-14.5%) (note: data is not available for some LSOAs in 2011).



Together with this overall population decrease, CORE data shows that social housing lettings have fallen in St Helens LA area from 2,428 in 2011/12 to 2,269 in 2012/13 – a decrease of 6.5%. Lettings in Knowsley increased by 3.2%. This compares to an overall decrease of 1.5% in Merseyside.



In the year ending in March 2013, there were 811 decisions made by the planning authority in St Helens. Some 84 of these (10.4%) were regarding developments for housing. This represents 14.3% of all housing-related decisions in Merseyside.



Map 1: Percentage change in population

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