

## Westmorland and Lonsdale 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.



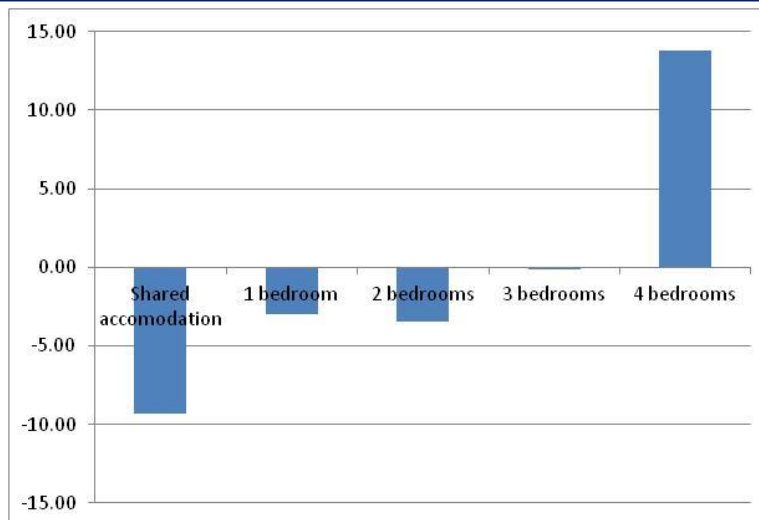
The Trussell Trust's latest figures show that more people are being referred to foodbanks with Benefit related problems since April's welfare reforms. Between April and June, over 150,000 people received three days' emergency food from a Trussell Trust foodbank - 200% more than the same period in 2012.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



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 1.1% between March and May this year. Meanwhile, claims of Local Housing Allowance in the private sector fell by 2.3% in the same period compared with a Cumbrian average increase of 1.5%.



While the average Housing Benefit award rose by 1.4%, the average weekly LHA award fell by 0.6% and by multiplying the number of claimants by average weekly award an overall weekly LHA cost decrease of 2.8% (£2,297) 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 South Lakeland LA area, social landlord possession claims in the first two quarters of 2013 stood at 38. This compares to 50 claims in the corresponding timeframe in 2012 – a 24% decrease. Landlord possessions remained at 3 over the corresponding timeframes. In the private sector (rented and mortgage), while claims grew by 8.8%, possessions fell by 14.3%.



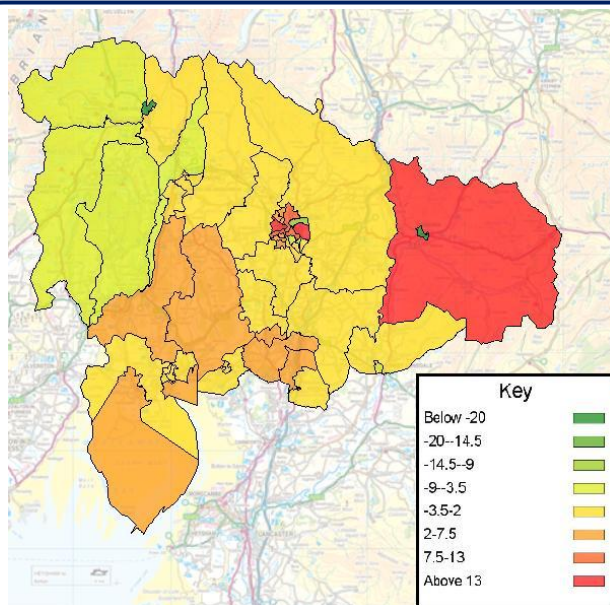
According to ONS figures, the population in the constituency fell by 0.2% from 84,130 in 2010 to 83,999 in 2011. The map below shows the population change by lower super output area and that the greatest population increase has taken place in the LSOA covered by the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale ward (18%) but a part of the same ward has seen the greatest decrease (-28.4%) (note: data is not available for some LSOAs in 2011).



Notwithstanding this overall decrease in population, CORE data shows that social housing lettings have increased in South Lakeland from 387 in 2011/12 to 476 in 2012/13 – an increase of 23%. This compares to an overall increase of 3.5% in Cumbria.



In the year ending in March 2013, there were 795 decisions made by the planning authority in South Lakeland. Some 100 of these (12.6%) were regarding developments for housing. This represents 17% of all housing-related decisions in Cumbria.



**Map 1:** Percentage change in population

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