

Blyth Valley Parliamentary Constituency

This is the first bulletin of 2014 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



The third [Real Life Reform](#) report found an increase in the average debt of respondents taking part in the study (£3,503) with debt repayments increasing by 58% since October. 46% of participants report having nothing left each week to live on once rent and essentials such as food and bills have been paid.



Last year we reported that in Blyth Valley, 4,425 children live in poverty – 25% of the child population in the constituency. According to figures by The Children's Society, 2,129 children in poverty are estimated to miss out on the [warm home discount](#) in the constituency.



A number of sources report that households affected by the spare room subsidy cannot move due to a lack of suitable accommodation. In the first three quarters of 2013/14, there were 1,604 general needs lettings in Northumberland (CORE data). This compares to 1,338 lettings in the same period of 2012/13 (a 19.9% increase).



Data released by the Department of Communities and Local Government in October shows that a total of £416,365 was allocated to Northumberland Council in Discretionary Housing Payment funding. Of that, £255,428 has been committed (61.3%). The greatest demand on this (£149,405) was allocated to support 1,197 households affected by the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector.

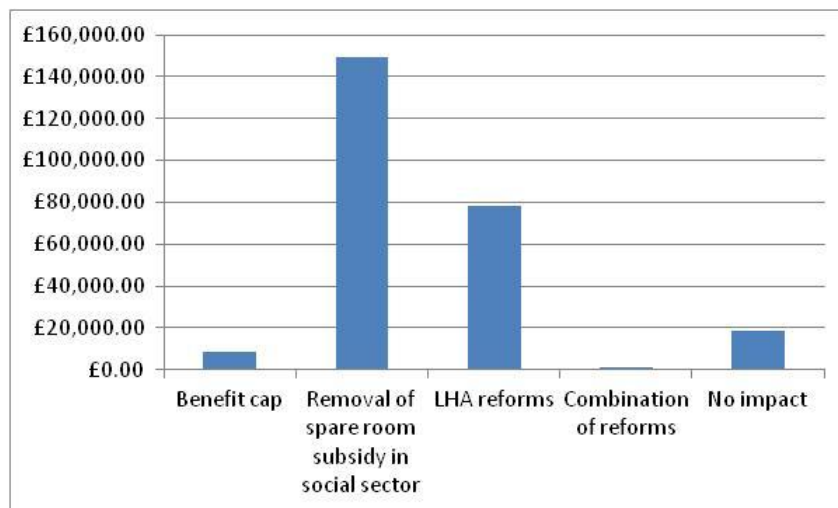


Figure 1: Summary of DHP Awards

Housing Market



The Chancellor announced in his Budget Statement that the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme will be extended until March 2020. Since its launch on 1st April 2013 to the end of February 2014, a total of 86 homes were bought in Northumberland with support of the scheme. This represents 8.5% of the 1,016 completed equity loans in the North East.



Average house prices in Northumberland in February 2014 stood at £117,324 a decrease of 6.5% on the same period in 2013. This is despite sales volumes being on a general upward trend, ending on 391 in December 2013 compared with 299 in December 2012.



Vacant dwellings have been on a general downward trend since 2008. In October 2013 there were a total of 5,246 vacant dwellings in Northumberland compared with 5,729 in 2009. Of the 2013 figure, 145 were owned by housing associations. Long-term vacants have fallen by 18.7% since 2009.



In 2012/13, Northumberland Council made a total of 593 homeless decisions. Of these, 227 applicants were accepted as being homeless and in priority need (38.3%). The number accepted as being homeless equates to 1.62 per 1,000 households in the borough – down from 1.68 in 2011/12 and up from 1.39 in 2010/11.



Figure 2: Change in house prices and sales volumes

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