North West Durham 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 North West Durham, 4,338 children live in poverty – 23% of the child population in the constituency. According to figures by The Children's Society, 2,088 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 2,428 general needs lettings in County Durham (CORE data). This compares to 2,644 lettings in the same period of 2012/13 (an 8.2% decrease).

Data released by the Department of Communities and Local Government in October shows that a total of £883,089 was allocated to County Durham Council in Discretionary Housing Payment funding. Of that, £263,050 has been committed (29.8%). The majority of this (£191,538.50) was allocated to support 555 households affected by the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector.

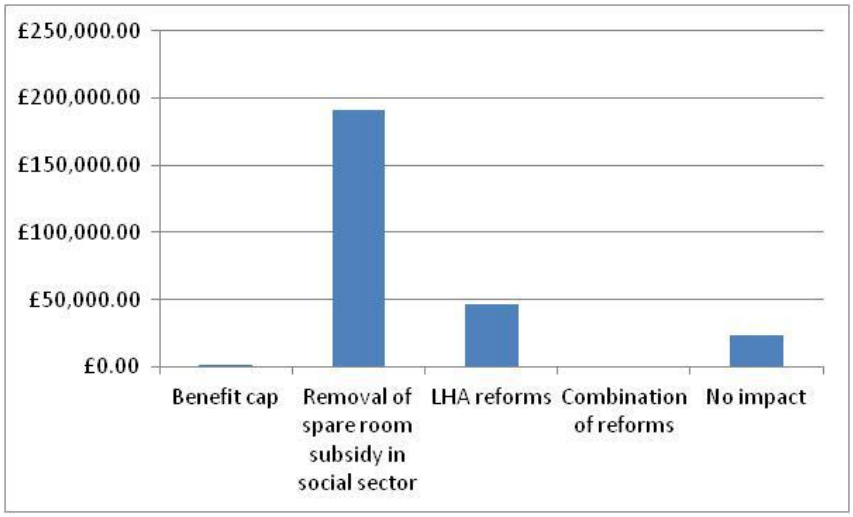

Figure 1: Summary of DHP Awards

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 194 homes were bought in County Durham with support of the scheme. This represents 19.1% of the 1,016 completed equity loans in the North East.

Average house prices in County Durham in February 2014 stood at £69,863 a decrease of 16.3% on the same period in 2013. This is despite sales volumes being on a general upward trend, ending on 614 in December 2013 compared with 470 in December 2012.

Vacant dwellings have been on a general downward trend since 2009. In October 2013 there were a total of 9,659 vacant dwellings in County Durham compared with 10,156 in 2009. Of the 2013 figure, 448 were owned by housing associations. Long-term vacants have fallen by 15.3% since 2009.

In 2012/13, County Durham Council made a total of 810 homeless decisions. Of these, 339 applicants were accepted as being homeless and in priority need (48.9%). The number accepted as being homeless equates to 1.52 per 1,000 households in the county – down from 1.97 in 2011/12 and 1.76 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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