

Washington and Sunderland West 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 Washington and Sunderland West, 6,063 children live in poverty – 30% of the child population in the constituency. According to figures by The Children's Society, 2,918 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 1,797 general needs lettings in Sunderland (CORE data). This compares to 1,437 lettings in the same period of 2012/13 (a 25% increase). Lettings of one-bedroom properties grew by 1% (Q3 2013/14 compared to Q3 2012/13).



Data released by the Department of Communities and Local Government in October shows that a total of £658,202 was allocated to Sunderland Council in Discretionary Housing Payment funding. Of that, £242,509 has been committed (36.8%). The greatest demand on this (£90,470) was to support 207 households affected by the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector.

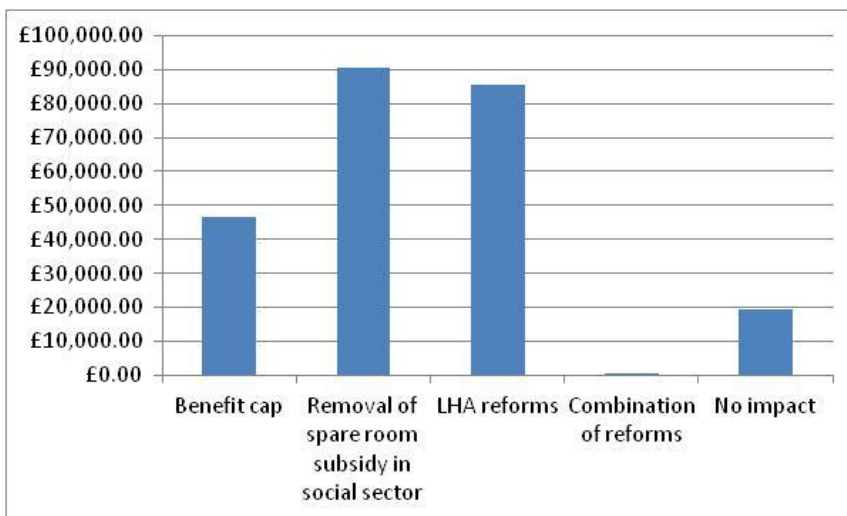


Figure 1: Summary of DHP Awards

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 105 homes were bought in Sunderland with support of the scheme. This represents 25.7% of the 408 completed equity loans in Tyne & Wear.



Average house prices in Sunderland in February 2014 stood at £92,060 an increase of 11.1% on the same period in 2013. This is driven by sales volumes being on a general upward trend, ending on 293 in December 2013 compared with 197 in December 2012.



Vacant dwellings have been on a general downward trend since 2008. In October 2013 there were a total of 4,198 vacant dwellings in Sunderland compared with 4,440 in 2008. Of the 2013 figure, 396 were owned by housing associations. Long-term vacants have fallen by 28.7% since 2008.



In 2012/13, Sunderland Council made a total of 306 homeless decisions. Of these, 125 applicants were accepted as being homeless and in priority need (40.8%). The number accepted as being homeless equates to 1.02 per 1,000 households in the district – up from 0.68 in 2011/12 but down 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:
Barry Turnbull, Policy Services Officer, 0191 5661030 or barry.turnbull@northern-consortium.org.uk